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LONE LIFE:

A YEAR IN THE WILDERNESS

BY

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AUTHOR OF

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"ALL ROUND THE WORLD," "A HUNTER'S ADVENTURES IN THE
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"ACCESSIBLE FIELD SPORTS," &c.

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LONE LIFE:

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CHAPTER I.

LAST night, although still August, we had frost; I should think the thermometer cannot have gone down more than a degree or two beneath freezing point; its effect, however, is quite apparent on the trees and bushes, for the various shades of green, except in the coniferous trees, have become tipped with gold, or burnished copper-colour. The result is charming to the eye, and imparts a softness to the distance that previously did not exist.

Gradually we have increased the length of the day's travel, till we have succeeded in passing each night at our old camping grounds. The air is so pure in these uplands, that the sojourner seems to

drink it in with relish, and every respiration appears to impart fresh strength and vigour. How many are there who have means at their command, still suffer from various ailments that a residence on or tour over these barrens would benefit, still they remain at home. Such may be apathy to the result, it surely cannot be indolence. Let them pull themselves together, make a start, cease not in their purpose till they have arrived here, and in two months they will return new men.

At length we reached the lake. Cariboo's keen eyes soon detected indications that strangers had visited the place since our departure, and therefore felt a little anxious for fear our canoe had been misappropriated ; however, such a serious mishap had not befallen us. That the unknown did not belong to his people, he satisfied me, and that white men were among them he felt perfectly certain.

On inquiring how he knew this, he pointed out two different sized tracks ; the feet that made them wore moccasins, but the toes were turned out in their walk.

" White man walk this way," said he, grinning, turning his toes out to an absurd extent. " Indian, so," placing each foot down parallel to the other. Thus the sand at the mouth of the stream told me that I was not the only white man who had visited this remote spot.

I have mentioned with what a splendid rapid this rivulet hurled its waters into the lake. It even looked more attractive now than previously, and the trout played in the dancing current in countless thousands.

Soon I got my rod together, and in the space of half an hour had landed more than we could well consume, although our appetites were none of the smallest. The fish, however, did not run large, all being about the same size, namely, a little exceeding two pounds.

The weather became very close towards night, and all animal life, except the owls, wondrously still; these creatures, on the contrary, were remarkably vociferous; laughing, screeching, and swearing, as if in their selfishness they considered there were no others than themselves in the universe, or that if there were, that they had exactly the same taste as themselves in what constituted melody.

Cariboo says it is going to rain, the scud overhead caused me to think that a gale is portended; but as we have a good camp in an admirably-situated position, it does not matter whether it blows high or low, or that the rains should descend with all the mad reckless impetus of the thunder-storm.

When we awoke in the morning it had done both,

so each took credit for being weatherwise and congratulated himself on his ability to decipher what the pages of heaven had written on them.

About nine the rain ceased, but the wind freshened, while the waves upon the lake being no longer beat down by its fury, increased to such an extent, that the observer would have imagined as he gazed upon them, that he was looking over old Father Ocean in one of his fitful moods. The Indians, nothing loth, were ready for a start; to acquiesce in their desire would have entailed a long paddle, possibly danger, certainly a wetting, for the white horses reared their heads angrily on every portion of the lake that was unsheltered from the blast, therefore I resolved to postpone embarkation till the morrow.

Cariboo evidently would have preferred that the delay had not occurred, still he said nothing, did not even grumble, but, looking grumpy, took his gun and went off for a hunt, while Sugar and self got the canoe round to the mouth of the river, for its *embouchure* was well sheltered from being on the weather shore, and tried the trout. Going beyond the water I had fished last night, the boy held the craft by a pole, and I, having mounted a large salmon fly, commenced work.

The trout were famished with hunger, if an opinion can be formed from the voracity they displayed to take

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my lure, and the deeper water that I was whipping possessed heavier fish than those I had captured the previous evening. After an hour and a half of work I ceased for lunch, renewing the sport about five; by sunset I had close on three dozen, several of which exceeded four pounds, one I am certain would have turned the scale at six. But for my rod being so light I might have doubled the number; for after landing a fish I was generally fast in another at the second or third cast.

Off the mouth of this stream the trout were collected in uncountable numbers, evidently waiting for the water of it to rise to enable them to proceed to their favourite spawning beds. An extraordinary thing—at least it would be deemed so in England—was that the fish totally disregarded the canoe; even under its bottom many could be seen, as if they totally ignored its presence.

With the decline of the sun returned the Indian. In his hand was a fisher; although not aquatic he had killed it on the margin of the lake, localities they are especially fond of. The largest of the tree-martins, in contradistinction to the genus to which it belongs, its fur is somewhat coarse. It has a very prominent and peculiarly expressive eye, still is a perfect fiend in nature. The Indians regard it as a great medicine, and eat certain portions of

its body to imbue them with courage; what part I did not discover, for the slayer objected to enlighten me, supposing doubtless that I should laugh at his superstition. However, so highly did he value his prize that he did not now regret the delay caused by not starting in the morning, proved amply by his glum looks having disappeared, and his tongue wagging with more than usual volubility.

Next morning the gale having somewhat subsided, we got under way, each handling his paddle with such vigour that we soon left the shelter of the land, and were dancing about among the white-capped waves. Our craft behaved splendidly; it was as buoyant as a cork, but from being high out of the water, required an immense amount of elbow-grease to propel it forward. Not being in training I soon got fatigued; but cease my labours as long as I was able to hold out I could not, for it required the combined efforts of all to make headway against wind and sea. By the elevation of the sun there remained but a couple of hours till it set, yet only half the distance intended had been accomplished. A barren ridge of rock without timber was to leeward; from its uninviting appearance I scarcely liked to propose it as a halting-place. However, it was evident all were getting exhausted, and although slowly crawling to windward, still making quite as much in-drift. Nearer

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and nearer we approached the inhospitable jumble of stones, the waves beat relentlessly on its shore, and numerous spaces of white foam near at hand told that the bottom was irregular, and that jagged boulders in places almost reached the surface. We all did our utmost. Cariboo in the stern toiled with superhuman strength, and if a way always followed a will, we should have succeeded in weathering the reef. Momentarily I felt we were getting nearer and nearer to danger, at length as we tumbled off the crest of an unusually big wave, there was a 'grating sound, then a ripping noise, and the water boiled in through the bottom of the canoe, an aperture having been torn nearly a foot in length.

Cariboo was equal to the emergency. Retaining hold of the stern, he dropped into the water, and in hurried words begged us to do likewise, for unless we followed his advice, we should lose guns and everything. Sugar took the water like a musquash, I followed suit and struck out for land; fifty yards I had scarcely traversed when I commenced to feel exhausted. Straightening myself to feel for bottom, I thankfully touched it. Between wading and swimming I was soon on *terra firma*, the boy having preceded me by some minutes.

The Indian never better proved his worth than on this occasion; he kept his hold upon our shipwrecked

craft and forced it, by almost superhuman efforts, before him, for being lightened of a good portion of its freight the leak happily did not gain so rapidly.

Cariboo fortunately soon got into his depth, but the difficulty was where to effect a landing for the canoe; soon this was discovered, and all our property, wet certainly, was safely landed.

A more cheerless night than that I do not think I ever passed. There was no shelter to be obtained, and little if any firewood sufficiently dry to burn, still we had every reason to be thankful, for if the accident had occurred further from shore, I believe I never could have succeeded in reaching it, and more than probable all my goods would have found a resting-place in the bottom of the lake.

In the morning I arose cramped and miserable, every bone in my body had found out a new ache, for the softest level surface I could find to lie on was the top of a honeycombed rock, and my system rebelled against such treatment. An indifferent meal, however, did much to mitigate my pains, but when the canoe was inspected I became sick at heart, for I felt convinced it never could be made sufficiently seaworthy to take us away, although the lake had now become as calm as a mill-pond.

Unfortunately such a *contretemps* had not been anticipated, so no gum for caulking was among our

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gear, still the two Indians laboured sedulously, picking a piece off here and a piece off there, from wherever they thought it could be spared, still their industry and skill failed to make it sufficiently buoyant to carry all. After supper Cariboo proposed starting at once alone, promising to bring aid as soon as possible. I did not envy the plucky lad the trip, for in a few minutes after he was afloat the canoe's floor was flooded; however, he was confident, pointed laughingly to the baling scoop, and with a deep, strong stroke, sailed off into the darkness.

Another night of discomfort; even the dogs seem to feel and testify their disapprobation by constant restlessness. Thank goodness, ere noon came relief had arrived; if I had been detained here much longer I believe I should have possessed as many callosities on my person as a camel.

A welcome greeting our deliverers received, for I knew, or had met, them all before, the old chief as steersman occupying the seat of honour; and lustily did they hang to their paddles, almost lifting their light craft from the water. Four o'clock saw us entering the little bay, and a crowd upon the beach waiting to greet our arrival.

The whole hamlet had, in fact, turned out, and a merry laugh or kindly nod met me on every side. The old squaw warmly clasped my hand, and pronounced

something I did not quite catch, the others lauding her sentiment. And Saucy was there—resplendent in her brilliant bronze complexion and graceful form. Fawn-like she approached me, and after pronouncing some pretty compliment, took my gun from my hand and led the way to the wigwam of her father. Never was guest more warmly welcomed, or worn-out hunter more solicitously guarded; and truly I required all this consideration, for I felt that my frame was thoroughly demoralised, so yawned and gave other indications of sleepiness long before the hour for retiring had arrived.

But these kind simple people understood my want; a splendid bearskin was spread on the floor for a bed, my pack placed close at hand, so ere the second pipe had been consumed, I was away, far away in distant lands, at least in dreams.

Next morning I learned, from the old chief, that Antoine had returned; he did not forget to add, "He bad white man;" he further informed me that he had left and gone off north, to where the white squaw lived; further, that he had taken Fatty-plumpy with him, whom the old man vowed he had stolen. Still, he added, if he was kind to her, he could forgive him, for she was better as his squaw than as an Indian's.

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choose to take notice of it, for fear my interest might be misconstrued. From the estimate I had formed of her character I did not think that much inducement would be required to cause her to elope; but I felt certain her future life would have been far happier if she had united herself to one of her own race. Poor, fat, chubby, impulsive child, I feared she had made a sorry bed, from which she was never likely to be able to muster sufficient resolution to tear herself.

But who was this white squaw I had heard so often mentioned? To all my inquiries I get one answer, "Missionary squaw." Can it be possible for a white woman to be so self-sacrificing as to dwell alone in these wilds?

Antoine's sudden return and as rapid disappearance without visiting me, struck me as strange. What could it portend? My late residence was no secret, and he might have learnt it if he desired. Long I brooded and thought over the matter, and was still more deeply involved in mystery afterwards than before.

For an extremely moderate remuneration—in fact, at first he positively refused to listen to any proposal of payment for the service—the old chief agreed to transport myself, Sugar, and all my belongings to

the shanty, and send my canoe, which had now been thoroughly repaired, across the portage.

Bidding all farewell, Cariboo promising to join me in a few days, we embarked on board one of the large family crafts, and soon doubled the point, and threading the intricacies of the river, beautiful in its solitude, ever varying, ever changing, ever lovely sunset soon brought us in view of our hut, over which truly hung an air of desolation.

When back some days, the old shanty and its little surrounding clearing looked as cheerful as ever. What is it that imparts such an air of comfort to it now we are returned? Well, I will tell you—that clear white wreath of smoke ascending from the chimney does the whole thing; it is the finishing touch to the picture, life to the body it inhabits. My Indian friends, although I have now returned some days, have not yet departed for their home. Of course they are my guests and live at my expense; for none so far have done anything in the shape of hunting, except it be to dawdle an hour or two away by the river, and return at its termination with a string of trout. Feeding them I must not be imagined for a moment to grudge, they would do as much for me; but half a dozen Red-skins, independent of my own family circle, within the confined limits of my dwelling, tries ventilation rather hard.

The first night I put up with it, I was too tired to be fastidious; but the second was more than I could bear; it recalled vividly one never to be forgotten—that succeeding our landing in the Gulf of Petuli to invest the Taku Forts. The whole encampment was a swamp of the most dismal kind, sticky and clammy as a paddy-field that had just absorbed the water with which it had been flooded. The rain fell in one uninterrupted drenching down-pour, soaking everything from food to clothing; while the wind, although not particularly high, was sufficiently so to prevent a tent standing, where it could not obtain the support of well-braced storm-ropes; but that was impossible, for the earth was without consistency, and pegs seemed to be extracted from it even with greater facility than the mallet drove them down.

The prospect of a night exposed to such weather was very far from pleasant, but there appeared to be no alternative. As an old forager I was expected to devise some plan to lessen our misery; in fact, if I had failed to do so, I felt convinced I should wondrously sink in the estimation of those that surrounded me. But I believed that I was overtaxed, and that only some unseen stroke of good luck could save me. Leaving the conclave of miserables, I poked about in every direction. Examining critically

the jumble of stones and mud that had once formed human habitations, hoping material might even be found to make a floor, and possibly an overhead shelter; but long was my search fruitless. At length trying to disengage an old beam, which doubtless had at one time done duty for a rafter, from amid the *débris* in which it was partially imbedded, I discovered an aperture, which, on being enlarged, exposed an entrance to a pig-stye. On examination I found it possessed a roof which could be made water-tight by spreading over it one or two tents; but the floor was filthy, the dirtiest family of pigs in all China must have possessed it for a domicile through many, many successive generations.

Calling my servant and some of the men, we shovelled out the *débris*, hoping to get to the bottom of the richly manured soil; but such was a fruitless job, for the earth was saturated, not for a few inches, but I believe to the depth of an ordinary grave. However, the place, bad as it was, was better than the open swamp, so I had several bales of forage brought in and deeply strewed on the floor. Over this came our water-proofs, and the eight or nine brother officers who crowded into the stye's limited space, voted me a good fellow and a prince among old campaigners.

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It was no use being fastidious ; each thought he perceived something highly objectionable to his sensitive nose, but believing that prejudice in occupying a tenement which had been devoted to such a purpose had much to do with it, said nothing on the subject. Before midnight the trumpeting of numerous nasal organs proclaimed that all had entered dreamland.

The *reveillé* sounded at the usual hour ; prompt to the call all sprung up ; but, oh ! the smell that greeted them. To stand it now they had returned from oblivious sleep was impossible, so forth each rushed as he had risen from his couch. Salt pork was unfortunately among our rations ; for months afterwards I never looked at a piece of it without remembering its producers were cousins, English or American, to the very dirty creatures that inhabited the sty on the Gulf of Petuli.

Well, such was the smell, at least it was a gentle, although undeniable reminder of the past, that saluted my nostrils when I awoke the second morning, so I forthwith made fresh regulations in my household, that with exception of the chief and his daughter, the remainder of the escort should sleep out-doors.

No way disconcerted at my decision, they in a few

hours had built a very snug bough-house about a hundred yards from the shanty, and seemed to enjoy its shelter with the greatest amount of satisfaction.

After the habit of such establishments they always had an ample blazing fire going, which at night showed off the dark figures that crouched about it, and caused lights and shadows to flit or dance around that would have delighted the eye of any artist.

I should have been pleased if the old chief and his child had joined this coterie, but the old aristocrat showed no inclination to do so, and as I had not been above sharing his wigwam, it would have been a case of base ingratitude on my part to propose such a thing to him ; however, the same consideration I did not show for Master Sugar, as the breath of three mature persons I considered was as much as a shanty, twelve feet by eight, could stand, if due respect was paid to sanitary considerations.

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CHAPTER II.

PARTIAL as I am to shooting, there are many days that, although I take my gun with me, for you never know in a wild country when it may be required, I go forth simply for a wander and to enjoy the brilliant woodland scenery, or to study the habits and watch the eccentricities of animal life.

It is not unusual, at least I have known it so before, to have a short space of Indian summer as a forerunner of the season properly so called.

It was exactly such a day, the wind gentle but plaintive, the sky overcast, a smoky appearance in the atmosphere, while the sun resembled an immense red wafer stuck in the sky. As I had not been on the other side of the river for some time I determined to pay it a visit, as it had been undisturbed by the accession to my settlement. Taking the canoe, I paddled across the pool, leaving it there for my return.

I struck out a new route, and soon got through the heavily-timbered land that margined the stream ; then ascended some very gradual slopes, and ultimately came on a large opening which undoubtedly had been caused by a forest fire, for it was still covered with innumerable ram-pikes, the leafless, limbless remains of pine trees, which impart to the landscape, of all things I am aware of, the most dismal appearance. The overgrowth of brush, which usually in such situations is dense, was here rather sparse, while grass in many places grew thick, close, short, and abundant. A thorough solitude reigned over the entire waste, imparting to it a ghost-like stillness. Such surroundings are always food for thought, but generally of a very dismal kind, and the gloomy depressing atmosphere was not calculated to dispel them. I had almost made up my mind to retire and leave the place to the evil spirit that apparently had it in its keeping, when I heard the crashing of branches not over a hundred yards off. "There goes or comes," thought I, "the gnome of this retreat," determined either to give me a wide berth, or to dispute my right of intrusion.

Instead of carrying out my intentions of bolting, with the obstinacy peculiar to my race, I sat down on a fallen log, hoping at all events to have my

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curiosity gratified. Again and again came the noise of the crashing and breaking of boughs, ultimately followed by the grunt of a bull-moose. As the sound told that the animal was going from me, I followed it, still keeping in the open, and at length had the satisfaction to see a splendid fellow, carrying a magnificent head of horns, and black almost as night in his coat, walk into the clear ground about a hundred and fifty yards to my front. From the course he was taking I knew he must soon wind me, so I got upon a log to watch his movements. His manner was that of a bully spoiling for a fight, for he shook his head defiantly as if challenging or about to make a pass at an imaginary foe, stopping every few paces to gaze around, as if desirous of meeting or discovering something worthy on which to blood his virgin stiletto-pointed tines.

At length the moose caught my wind, in a few moments afterwards his eye detected me; for some minutes he stood as if considering the propriety of giving me battle; but after-thought gained the mastery, and the braggart trotted off, doubtless resolving to make up for his disappointment by punishing with additional severity the next of his own sex and race he encountered.

The day was destined to be productive of infor-

mation, for the moose had scarcely left my sight, when from the elevated position which I still retained, I observed close to me a movement among a small clump of briars and hazel; in a few seconds afterwards a Canadian lynx, better known here by the name of peshoo, bounded past, retraced his steps, and continued to hunt backwards and forwards, as if endeavouring to pick up a scent which it had lost. Soon after it was joined by a companion, and the pair doubled and quartered the ground over and over again. At length they flushed a pack of spruce-grouse, out of whose numbers I have little doubt they each secured a victim.

The Canadian lynx must not be confused with the bay lynx or lucifee, for although both are carnivorous, they are totally different animals. The former resembles the old world lynx; the latter, if it were not for its abbreviated tail, is very like the European wild-cat, and from this resemblance doubtless owes the name of wild-cat, by which it is universally known to the settlers.

The peshoo, although standing twenty inches at the shoulder, is a timid creature, confining its depredations to hares, grouse, squirrels, and such small game. It possesses a beautiful soft fawn-coloured coat, large tufts at the extremity of its ears, a small

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but vicious-looking head, a slim body, with upright, powerful, heavy limbs, terminated by extremely large cushioned feet. With the exception of the hunting-leopard, I very much doubt if there is an animal in existence so swift in making three or four successive bounds upon its prey.

Doubtless it would attack man, if cornered, and unable to escape otherwise, yet it is really very shy, and is so fragile in construction that a sharp blow across the loins is almost certain to break its back.

From their keen sense of hearing and acute powers of scent, although far from scarce, they are not often seen. Report says they are most affectionate parents; doubtless these latter good qualities, and their scrupulous cleanliness of coat, have endeared them to me, for as special favourites I regard them.

Their progeny, from personal experience, I cannot say much in favour of. Possibly the two I possessed were too old before capture; but more spiteful, relentless, unforgiving fiends I never previously met, and worst of all they persistently refused to take food, so died, giving me all my labour, coaxing, and anxiety for nothing. However, I have heard, in fact know, that such is not always the result, and that when once they are reconciled to captivity, they become much

attached to their owner, and almost rival a dog in sagacity, but one weakness they are never able to overcome, viz., being death upon poultry.

I let the lynxes gang their gait, and happy in having the pleasure of making their acquaintance, I pursued my way homewards.

Cariboo I found was there. On his way across the portage, he had killed a deer, which already had been packed into camp, and large portions of it sputtered over the camp-fire, a whiff of its odour giving me quite an appetite. In addition to the venison he had added to our larder a brace of remarkably fine beavers. So for supper we enjoyed that delicacy of the Western Indian country—beaver-tails stewed with a little pork, the gravy being thickened with flour. The result was a most delicious dish. At our evening meal Cariboo informed me that he has discovered a couple of dams up the tributary that flows into the river above the shanty, and that in both are plenty of inhabitants. So, desiring to learn more of the habits of these interesting rodents, we have arranged to visit the place together if the weather be propitious in the morning.

There are beautiful and superbly beautiful sunrises, this was the latter. The course of the river was free, a very rare occurrence before nine o'clock,

of the drapery of mist that gauze-like floats over its surface, and the foliage from a few sharp night-frosts was truly magnificent. Not so *prononcé* as it will be later in the season, but so soft and blended as to cause it to look ærial. A sight of one such morning in these woodland solitudes is worth a year of travel; an ample reward for all the discomforts and inconvenience of dwelling beyond civilisation.

The dense woodland, where the giant pine, erect hemlock, and twisted cedar struggle with each other for the occupation of every inch of soil, is not the place to see the soft tintings of autumn, for these lords of the forest are ever clothed in their dark sombre drapery of harsh green, but along the bed of the river, or on the edge of the barrens, where the hardwoods have succeeded in establishing a settlement, out comes the glory of colouring, which I could almost credit to the brush of fairies.

Proceeding directly south, we did not rest till the barren was gained; here, from the country being open, the frost appeared to have taken more effect, the maples, birches, and mountain-ash foliage having become either a bright straw colour, or a soft brown, while the sumach, oak, and whortleberry are tipped with scarlet, and the larch with gold; the asters and golden-rods, not having lost their beauty, in no small degree

assist the charming *tout ensemble*. Resting as much for breath—for Master Cariboo always obliges me to outpace myself to keep up with him—as to admire the charms that surrounded me, I observed large flights of plover, hovering in their ever-changing fantastic figures. The want of small shot prevented my endeavouring to get within range of these lovely birds.

Through a swamp, almost impassable, and over a ridge steep and rugged as the sides of Ben Arthur, brought us to a lovely little sequestered valley, through the centre of which flowed a calm, clear rivulet. Half a mile above where we struck its margin, the stream spread out into a miniature lake, this expansion of water being caused by a dam whose construction would doubtless be attributed to beavers, by those who wish to believe in the animal's engineering abilities, but to my eye simply the result of a block produced by the superabundance of *débris* washed down in the spring freshets. At the first glance five beaver-houses were conspicuous, and, as our approach had been very guarded and upwind, two of their inhabitants were seen slowly swimming about, one with a bough in its mouth upwards of a yard long. As this creature was within easy shot, I fired; in a moment the water boiled around it from the energy of its dying struggle,

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and ere the smoke from my gun had drifted away life had become extinct. But the report had made a strange and startling alteration in the previous solitude, for every bunch of rushes, every yard of swamp seemed to have sent forth a messenger, for duck after duck, in hundreds, kept rising as far up the course of the stream as I could see, each calling in their sharp, harsh note, as if warning others of the intruder's vicinity, or expressing regret that their morning slumbers should so ruthlessly be disturbed. But, leaving the broad-bills to take care of themselves, after following the course of the stream a few yards, my attendant came to one of his traps, and in it was a prize; further up, at the second dam, he had the same luck, thus securing as a return for our labour three beavers. Some years back, when hats were made from the pelt of this animal, in a pecuniary sense such fortune would have been deemed a great stroke of luck: but, from incessant persecution at that period, they were much scarcer than at the present date. Change of fashions, or man's ingenuity in discovering a substitute in silk, out of which to fabricate our head-gear, the beaver family should truly be thankful for. Where the margin of the stream became rocky, the ferns, mosses, and seedlings of various trees were tramped

down by the constant passage of these aquatic animals to and from their favourite haunts, and partially or entirely barked limbs of osier, willow, and birch strewn the ground on every side.

The mode of trapping beaver is not understood by all. A few words on the subject might be acceptable.

The trap is not placed upon land, but submerged in the brook or lake near a place that shows evidence of its frequently being used for landing when the game is about to proceed inland in search of food. Thus, according to depth of water, the trap may be sunk from a few inches to a couple of feet, and over it, attached by a string, floats a piece of chewed or pounded osier smeared over with castoreum. This substance, which is of a greasy nature and orange colour, is obtained from two sacs situated at the root of the animal's tail. The smell that it produces seems to have the same effect on beavers as valerian on cats, for immediately it is scented the otherwise wary quadruped plays round about it, the result being that one or other of its legs is certain to get caught. But the beaver is not ignorant apparently of what trouble is in store for him when discovered by the hunter, so frequently gnaws off its foot to obtain release.

One such lesson as this would be supposed to make a lasting impression, and that castoreum would in future be carefully given a wide berth; but "once caught, twice shy" is not here applicable, for it is no uncommon circumstance to secure a captive who a day or two previously had amputated one of his own members.

The beaver-house externally is a very rough affair, internally it is wondrously snug and scrupulously clean, there being a large wide passage, in which the animal shakes itself previously to entering the dormitory.

Independent of the dwelling erected by their ingenuity, each family of beavers has another sanctum, which, however, I think is rarely used, except in cases of great danger; this is a subterraneous passage, the entrance to which is under water, and running up inland sometimes as much as thirty feet.

Among other qualities as well as ingenuity, this interesting rodent does not live from hand to mouth, but lays up a stock of edibles for winter use; this generally consists of short sticks of poplar and cedar, which are submerged in the mud, frequently several feet beneath the surface of the water, their depth preventing them becoming frozen, and therefore remain always fit for use even in the severity of a northern winter.

CHAPTER III.

WHILE I was searching about, amusing myself investigating anything that struck my fancy, my companion left me to visit a mink-trap. He had not been absent above twenty minutes, when the sharp report of his gun reverberated from tree and hillside. I felt convinced that it was large game, for Cariboo was too careful of his ammunition to expend it on aught else, unless told to do so; so, picking up my gun, I rushed off to join in the sport, if any was to be had. I had nearly gained the place where I had noted the puff of smoke hang—very much out of breath with my unwonted exertion—when I almost ran against a three-quarter-grown bear. Which was most astonished I could not say, but Bruin recovered his presence of mind first, for before I got my double-barrel to my shoulder he was out of sight in the bush of swamp-alder which here was unfortunately very dense.

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I raised my voice and shouted. A whistle answered me. This I knew was expressive of a desire for me to be silent, and to say that other game was close. However, I stealthily wound my way from where it came, and ultimately detected the fur cap of my associate over the edge of a giant windfall. From the steady, unmoving position of his head, I took warning, and, therefore, instead of advancing, as heretofore, crawled upon all fours to his side.

However, not a word could I get from him ; when I whispered, a pantomimic movement of the hand entreated me to silence. Once I attempted to raise myself, but gently I was pressed down. At length I was on the edge of mutiny and about to say some naughty words, when Cariboo dashed down his cap and gave vent to his wrath by uttering two or three expressions scarcely suitable to insert for the reader's edification ; then he continued, "The terriblest, biggest bear I most ever seed ; but he gone now ; he know too much."

On further inquiry, I found that he had come across a young cariboo, which he had killed ; but while in the act of reloading, discovered this venerable bear hanging about, doubtless with an eye to venison, the youngster I came across being unquestionably one of the old vixen's hopeful progeny. After some

trouble, we got our trophy suspended, which was scarcely more than half grown, and had a tremendous open wound across the ham of the left leg. Bruin doubtless was the culprit to whom the laceration should be attributed.

I feel convinced that a fair shot, with ordinary perseverance, could at this season of the year shoot three or four bears weekly. In whatever direction you choose to go evidence of their presence is conspicuously thrust before you, especially where whortleberries and raspberries grow; in fact, in many places square yards of surface among such bushes are bare or covered with leaves and broken limbs, as if the devourers, not satisfied with gratifying their appetites, endeavoured to do as much damage as possible. A sharp quick tramp of an hour and a half brought us so close to home that I could hear the click, click of Sugar's axe as he cut away at the wood-pile, in order to have a necessary supply of fuel ready on the hunters' return. This was the lad's invariable practice; for afterwards, if we had anything to narrate, any adventure to discuss, nothing could have got the boy beyond ear-shot. So thorough was he a hunter at heart, that next to actually being engaged in the chase, his greatest pleasure in life was to hear it spoken of.

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features become quite animated, his hands clutch each other, and his long half-closed eyes dilate, when a rencontre with a bear or the chase of a buffalo was described; and sometimes when a hair-breadth escape was on the tapis, it would become such a magnet of attraction to him that almost unconsciously he would draw closer and closer to the speaker's side, as if eager to devour the words before uttered.

There is scarcely a sport I know of that affords me more pleasure than moose calling, the only objection I can urge against it being that I am compelled to take a companion with me; for although I can make one or two of the required notes fairly, I am still very far from an accomplished caller. Thus the pleasure to be enjoyed from the solitude of the barren, the repose that rests upon the lonely forest lake, or the sombre shade of the mammoth trees, is much diminished. Sugar, although scarcely fifteen years of age, with that extraordinary power of imitation which nearly all Indians possess, is fairly successful; but Cariboo I believe to be without an equal in the science of moose calling. Indeed, very few white hunters ever attain sufficient excellence to deceive so cautious an animal, and one possessed of such an exquisite sense of hearing as this giant monarch of the woods, more especially if it is late in

the season, or when the neighbourhood has been disturbed by sportsmen.

Another advantage attached to shooting moose by this method is that the animals are in prime condition, their horns have reached maturity, and the velvet-like coating which lately covered them has disappeared, the tines and palmation looking smooth, fresh, and ready to do execution upon any foe that disputes his prowess, or interferes with his love affairs.

Moreover, the bracing fresh frosty air of a September evening so pulls you together that the tramp to your scene of operations is most enjoyable; not sufficiently cold to counteract the excitement of hearing the gallant quarry advance within range, although you may be lying full length upon the bare soil, or doubled up in a rocky recess.

For some days I had discussed the propriety of making my season's *début*—for my Indians report having already heard moose calling, an indication that the time had come when the aid of the birch-bark horn could successfully be employed—so on the evening of the 17th of September, all arrangements, such as the casting of bullets, cleaning guns, were made, that an early start might be effected on the following morning.

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It scarcely appeared as if I had been in bed over a few hours when I was awoke by Sugar and Cariboo lighting the fire, in order to warm some soup, so that we should not start on an empty stomach. If we had been near civilisation coffee would doubtlessly have been selected for this purpose; but let me assure all that a greater mistake the hunter cannot be guilty of, if it be at all possible to obtain the former. The only disadvantage exists in the length of time it takes to make; but then, if this is attended to the previous day, when wanted for use no more delay and attention is requisite than would be required to boil water.

On tumbling out of my bunk and sticking my head through our primitive door, I found that fortune had truly favoured us; for scarcely a breath of wind moved the leaves, and although there was a slight mist, still there was a very clear starlight. Cariboo noted the expression on my face, and smiling, said: "First-class morning for moose, Cap; guess we have plenty meat before night;" and I felt convinced his prophecy would come true.

Unhampered with baggage of any description, save and except our guns and ammunition, we left the shanty about three, followed up the course of the river for half a mile, then struck off at right-angles

through the timber land till the barrens were reached, along the edge of which we proceeded till the waters of a solitary and not very picturesque pond were in view. During all this tramp scarcely a word was interchanged between my companion and self, Cariboo leading the way at his usual quick but silent pace. We had barely halted when moose were heard upon a brow of woodland about a mile distant, so without delay we sought and immediately found an admirable hiding-place among some granite boulders covered with rhodora, now bright pink in colour from the effects of the late frosts. For some minutes my associate appeared engaged in thought; again and again he placed the horn to his mouth and removed it, as if uncertain of his powers to accomplish what he desired. At length the strange plaintive note, one unlike any other sound I know, echoed over the landscape. After a pause of nearly half an hour it was repeated, and to our gratification received a response; again, after some delay, the call was sounded, and the answer received came from an animal close at hand, so close that it startled both of us. Cariboo motioned me to get ready; no need of that, for I was so. A tearing of briers and the breaking of bushes now became distinctly audible scarcely fifty yards to my left; in an instant my eye was directed to the sound, and looming larger than

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an ox appeared the moose coming straight for us at a slashing trot. In a moment my gun sprung to my shoulder, in rapid succession both barrels were fired into the creature's breast, when staggering forward he fell with his head bent under him.

Our quarry, on inspection, proved to be a very large, but not well-fed animal. Judging from the narrowness and length, as well as thinness of the palmation of the antlers, he must have been extremely old. So great had been the force of his fall, that the tines of the left horn were completely buried in the hard soil.

At the proposal of the Indian, we shifted our position to the back of a log nearly half a mile from where we had been previously secreted; this we had abundant facilities to do unobserved, for day had not yet broken. Where we now were was more open, yet not nearly so much to my liking; but I made no comment, for I always make it a rule to leave such matters to the Indians, who on kindred subjects are much better qualified to form an opinion than myself.

This time, without hesitation, the Red-skin sounded his note. In little over a few minutes an answer was returned, followed by the distinct sound of broken boughs, evidently caused by the monarch of the woods brushing his horns against the dry or dead timber.

that surrounded him. Again another note issued from the call; this time the grunt of recognition was closer, but, from the lapse of time that had occurred, it was evident the creature was in no great hurry to come up, or suspicious that all was not correct. Cariboo now placed his horn close to the ground, and uttered a long, plaintive note. This had the effect of bringing the game closer, but several after efforts failed to make him leave the shelter of some dead ram-pikes a couple of hundred yards to the right, on whose sides he rattled his antlers as if venting on them wrath at the disappointment he had experienced in not finding a mate.

"He very old fox, but I more old fox," said my attendant, concluding, in a whisper, "You wait here; I soon get you shot." And from my side he glided away like a snake; in fact, so silent was his retreat that I could scarcely realise that he had left me. For over a quarter of an hour I remained wondering what was to occur next, the only sound audible being an occasional crash among the dead timber. At length a plaintive note came from my left, to which the bull grunted a response, and I could tell, from its distinctness, he was making for it, which plan, if followed out, would bring him past my stand. Again all was still, when a second note, very low and very soft, received another grunt in answer, the dis-

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tinectness of which assured me that the deer was much closer. The faintest tinge of light indicated break of day, and distant objects were becoming more clearly defined. Earnestly I fixed my eyes on where my ear told me the last sound had proceeded. At length, among some brush, I detected a movement; soon after made out the outline of the moose, but so well was he sheltered that I declined firing, as quite eighty yards intervened between us. Fortunately, my patience was not long tried. In response to another note from Cariboo's horn, the creature stepped into the open, and I fired. At the first shot the animal reared and lunged forward. Quick as thought I gave him the second barrel. I knew I had not missed, but feared the ball was badly placed; for in an instant afterwards, at a slashing trot, the moose dashed past me. Cariboo I had almost ceased to think of, but the sharp report of his gun brought the game headlong to the ground, for in its course it had approached his retreat. It was a splendid shot, and well worthy of being recorded.

This moose was young, and in magnificent condition, but had one of the brow points broken off the antlers close to the base. Cariboo, pointing this out, said, "That why he coward, frightened to come up; he expect more beating from ole bull."

Our success, the glorious sunrise, the bracing walk

home, made us both in the best of humours. Every incident of the two battles were fought over again, and the praises I gave the faithful fellow for his out-manceuvring the last bull fell on his ear like rain on parched land.

Of the audacity of the moose, I quote the following from the notes of Captain Hardy, R.A., one of the best of sportsmen, and most reliable of authorities on this subject:

"A sportsman, accompanied by an Indian, was moose-calling on Mosher's River, Nova Scotia, one morning in the autumn of 1867. They were on a barren, and near the margin of a heavy forest. A fine bull-moose came up to the call, and fell to the Indian's gun, when instantly another bull emerged from the woods, and charged at the prostrate animal. A second bullet brought him over, and he fell on the body of what had probably been his foe of the season.

"A settler in the backwoods, going out one October evening to chop firewood near his shanty in the forest, heard a bull-moose 'handy.' He returned for his gun, and, after a short stalk in the bushes, obtained a shot at the moose, an animal with superb antlers, and could distinctly see he had hit him in the neck. There he stood for a considerable time, while the settler, who had only the one charge, lay in the

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bushes; at length the beast turned and leisurely walked away. The man was up betimes next morning, and away to the same spot. He saw blood, and, following the trail for a short distance, heard sounds indicating the presence of moose. Having some faint idea of calling, he put a piece of bark to his mouth, and gave the note of the bull. Answering at once, a fine moose came in view, when he fired, and this time prostrated the animal, the identical one shot the evening before. He recognised the horns, and the wound in its neck.

“Apropos of this subject, the following extracts from his note-book, kindly placed at my disposal by ‘The Old Hunter,’ are highly interesting and illustrative. He says:

“‘I left my camp on Lake Mooin (the lake of the bear), Liscomb River, September, 1866, in company with Peter, Joe, and Stephen as my Indian hunters, intending to cross the next lake to the southward in a canoe which we had there secreted. On arriving at the lake, we found the wind so high that it was considered altogether unsafe to trust ourselves on its waters in our frail barque. About five o’clock the wind moderated, but, as I still thought that we could not reach my old calling-ground on the opposite side before the decline of the sun, I determined to cross

to a narrow neck of barren, distant from us by water about seven hundred yards. After various perils, we reached the spot, disembarked among the rocks, fixed a place for the calling-ground should the night be calm, collected our bedding of spruce-boughs picked in a neighbouring swamp, and, releasing our blankets from their cordings, prepared for supper. Suddenly all was still; the wind had gone down, and the western sky was tinged with the gorgeous colouring denoting a moose-caller's delight—a calm, serene night. All at once a cracking of wood was heard away down on our side of the lake, and presently more noises, plainly telling the presence of moose thereabouts. A few minutes of hesitation, and I induced Peter to sound the loved note from aloft; and not long after he descried a moose at fully a mile's distance, coming to the end of the forest. The margin of the lake on our side had been burnt, and was barren of bush or tree, except in a few places. Several persuasive calls induced the moose to show himself upon the barren, however only to return to the cover of the green woods, a fact, we all knew, proving him to be either a coward or a beaten deer. We coaxed; he still came on, showing himself occasionally on the barren, though never answering, and at length was espied about three hundred yards off, peering around him,

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and listening, his huge ears extended forwards to the utmost. We thought that he saw us, but he had cunning folks to deal with. We did not move or call. Down he came, making directly for us, now speaking for the first time. I was lying directly in his route, and, when distant about fifteen yards, I bowled over one of the finest and most cautious of his species I had ever met with. He was cast and butchered before the twilight faded.

“We supped, and that night lay replete; but my sleep not being of such a dead nature as that of my faithful followers, the crashing of trees and the bel-
lowing of moose emanating from the same direction as that whence came the fallen monarch, struck frequently on my ear. At cock-crow I woke up the sleeping aborigines. And, severe as had been the cold of the past night, we listened long and with intense interest to the distant sounds, not the usual sound of the cow-moose at this season, but a sort of unearthly roaring.

“We called, and presently observed two moose leave the woods, and approach us on the barrens. When about five hundred yards distant from us we lost sight of them in the alder bushes which grew thickly on the banks of a small brook flowing into the lake. Past this spot they would not come: we

did not advance, so we determined to kill no more moose on that occasion. Our object was simply to watch. I particularly wanted to ascertain from which animal the snorting and fierce bellowing came. We had perceived that they were male and female. They stopped in the alders for about fifteen minutes or so, making a great row, breaking sticks and pawing the water in swamp-holes with a loud splashing. At length we espied them besting a slow retreat on the route they had advanced upon, and I determined to take the canoe and follow them by water, leaving Stephen to prepare breakfast. The morning was perfectly calm, fog here and there rising from the lake and along the lines of the numerous brooks that emptied into it. I may here add that though I have named it Lake Merganser, owing to the numbers of those birds frequenting it, it would have been fully entitled to have been called Rocky Lake, as I think that both below and above its surface, rocks abound to a greater extent than in any other sheet of water in Nova Scotia, and that is saying a good deal.

“Stealing over the lake's surface, and seated in the bottom of our canoe, we could not well scan the woods along the margin, for the rocks on the shore were fully eight feet high. However, at length we sighted two large black objects ascending a hill.

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Peter called like a bull, and this at once arrested them. They turned, and one, for a moment lost to sight, appeared on the edge of the barren. Another step and he must have descended. It was a mighty bull-moose; he peered at us, and was motionless, while we with restrained breath, gazed upon him. After standing in that position for some minutes, he turned and looked towards where we had slept. I did the same, and could plainly see the boy Stephen perched upon the rock beneath which we had lain. Then he walked five or six steps, turned, and gave us a full side view, twice picking some twigs from the bushes, which we could hear him munching with his teeth, so close were we. During this wondrous sight a loud noise was made in the bush three times, when out walked a cow-moose. She, like her lord, looked hard at us, and I thought was 'for off.' Not a bit; she stopped for fully five minutes, then turned and faced the hill, emitting several times the angry grunt so dreaded by the Indian as a sign of ill-luck. The bull quietly took his departure, and we watched them enter the forest. This bull had only one horn. Peter declared that the other was a small stump—a malformation—but I shall ever be of opinion that he had lost it in battle, for on our return to our rocky home, and when butcher-

ing the dead moose, we found that he had been in the wars, and was much bruised about the neck and ribs on the near side.

“ ‘Parting with this most interesting couple, we paddled on to the foot of the lake, and called a few times at the head of a bog. We were quickly answered, and up came a rattling moose. He was astonished at seeing us, I feel certain, and was for bolting, but continued walking along the dry edge of the bog. Peter imitated a bull’s note, at which he turned fiercely round with mane, rump-hair, and ears erect, and answered angrily. This was repeated fully six times to our great amusement, at length he walked away, making constant ‘bockings,’ and rubbing his antlers against the burnt trees.

“ ‘All at once we espied another pair of moose coming from the opposite direction—a bull and a cow—and expected to see a meeting, perhaps a combat; but although there appeared every likelihood of such an occurrence, it was avoided by the pair retreating into the deep woods. The bulls ceasing to answer each other, we paddled back to camp, where little Stephen, though he had observed all the first part of the spectacle from the rock, had not neglected to provide for his ‘sacamow’ and comrade Red-skin a sumptuous repast of kidneys, steak, and coffee.

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“‘ I am a firm believer, and always was, that it is the cow-moose that makes the noise, by some called a roar, and I was thus a witness to the fact. Here was a glorious morning's work without bloodshed! Alas! last season upwards of fifty moose were killed about Lake Merganser. It is a fact that now not a track can there be seen.’ ”

But to resume my narrative.

CHAPTER IV.

WHEN we reached home, Sugar was in a great state of excitement. Scarcely had we disappeared in the morning before he heard a noise at the smoke-house. Picking up Cariboo's old single barrel, which was discarded as long as I permitted him to use my spare gun, the boy rushed out to learn the reason, when he discovered a bear on the summit of the hollow trunk, trying to pull the logs and things off the top that had been placed there for the double purpose of keeping in the smoke and out intruders. No way alarmed, the youngster cocked the gun, but it would not go off, although he made repeated efforts, almost touching the bear on one occasion with his muzzle. However, this plucky conduct was sufficient to alarm Bruin, who immediately beat a retreat.

This animal seems to be one of the most knowing scoundrels that it is possible to imagine, for he is

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ever giving evidence of his being in the neighbourhood by attempting to force his way into my store-room, invariably doing so when no one is at home. I have made sundry bower-houses over which I have exercised all my ingenuity. I have covered the trap in it with the most natural looking leaves and grasses, and supplied a variety of new and most enticing baits, still Mr. Bruin fights shy and refuses to be victimised. Even Cariboo has had a trial with no better success than myself, and when speaking of the bear says, "That old man be the devil;" if he were, he could not possess more artfulness.

The cunning of these animals is sometimes extraordinary. I heard of a settler's farm-yard being haunted by one of these canny beasts, scarcely a week passing without it making an appearance and committing ruinous depredations, but never doing so when the good man was at home. In fact it almost appeared as if the marauder watched the clearing till the head of the house left for market or for his usual avocation in the woods, when Bruin would fearlessly present himself to the women and children, who quite commenced to regard him as a haunting evil genius. But his day of reckoning came at last; the homestead ran short of provisions, the children commenced to look gaunt and thin, for the pigs that were to have

supplied the little household with pork had all been killed by the bear, so the old woman got savage, as the Americans say, her dander was riz, when she saw the cause of their troubles curveting around as if owner of the premises. So she took down the old gun from above the fireplace, which never was without a load in it, and slipping to the door, took aim over a stump, and pulled the trigger, dropping the weapon immediately after the explosion, and rushing into the house locked the door, never for a moment stopping to learn the result of her courage. Till Paterfamilias returned at night, no one crossed that threshold, for the mother doubtless thought that the black-coated savage was lurking near to take a deadly revenge upon the first of his assailant's offspring that should offer.

At length the familiar voice of the head of the family was heard. Soon the incident was narrated to him, a search was instituted, and Bruin was found dead within a few paces where he had received his death wound.

This anecdote I state in nearly the words imparted to me, and I thoroughly believe it, for the cunning of bears is proverbial; so this creature doubtless remained under the friendly shelter of the woods till it heard the monotonous click of the husbandman's

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axe, which told that the only one of the establishment, whose acquaintance he did not wish to make, was engaged in his daily occupation of chopping, so sallied forth. It is a notorious fact that if a bear has his haunt in the vicinity of a settlement, he will be seen frequently by the women and children, although the hunter's search for the unwelcome visitor may be fruitless for months.

Now this bear that so frequently visited my shanty was doubtless one of those cunning vagabonds who knew as well what a bear trap was as I did myself, so I commenced to believe my prospect of capturing him very slight indeed, and for several days did not visit where it was set. At length, when I did so, I found it sprung and the bait gone.

This gave me renewed hope, so I not only reset it, but went home to procure another to place in the immediate vicinity of the first. Our larder being rather low in its supply of fresh food, I took Skye with me in the hope that he would flush some grouse during the tramp.

Soon the second trap was set. Going thus far having killed nothing I started for a ramble to procure the birds. My success was even greater than anticipated, and about sundown I was struggling

nome with a heavy load. When scarcely half a mile from the shanty I missed my little companion. Of course I supposed that he had run on before me, so troubled myself no more about his absence. When I reached my dwelling I inquired if Sugar had seen him, "No, he had not." Still I was not uneasy, for a squirrel or a woodchuck might have attracted his attention; when discovering that I did not join him, he would desist scraping when tired, and not finding me, follow up my trail. Hour after hour passed, and still the dog remained absent. I consequently became uneasy, and several times went into the opening and caused the woods to echo with my shrill whistle, but no Skye answered. Since being ill, I have become more irritable and impatient, so fretted and conjured up all kinds of probable mishaps to my pet. First, I saw a wild-cat spring from a branch upon his back and ultimately strangle him; next, he had come across that luckless bear, which in his fearlessness he had approached too closely, when he had been seized and torn into pieces.

I sat awake all that night, hoping every moment I should hear his familiar scratch upon the door; but, alas! I was doomed to be disappointed. Again and again I went out and whistled, and the only response was the voice of the owls jeering me. Birds of ill

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omen I knew they were considered, and their harsh maniacal shrieks I construed into a warning of coming misfortune.

Those who are acquainted with dogs know how attached a person can become to them. Skye was a most affectionate, gentle little creature when at home, fond of being noticed and caressed, yet without a particle of cringing disposition, and he was almost as intelligent as a human being. Anything within dog's comprehension he learned at once, for he seemed but to live to do his master's bidding; and with all the above good qualities possessed such courage as feared nothing.

The night ultimately gave way to day, but tardily it did it. After my morning cup of soup, Sugar and self started to search the ground I had passed yesterday. The traps of course were visited, and in one of them was my poor pet—dead. I was so overcome that I could see nothing; for I am not ashamed to say that tears coursed down my cheeks, as I released the corpse of my favourite from the cruel teeth that had deprived him of life. Nor was Sugar less moved; he wrung his hands and sat down upon the earth hard by, looking the picture of despair. At length I deposited the body in the boy's arms, and we were about to start for home, when I discovered that the

other trap was gone, the heavy limb to which its chain was attached leaving a long furrow to show the direction in which it had been dragged, and to tell how powerful was the animal on which it had been sprung.

Knowing that the brute the trap was attached to could not go far, my attendant and self returned to the shanty with our precious load truly sad at heart. On my bed I deposited the remains, then selected some fresh ammunition, and with Sugar as henchman, returned to take up the trail and if possible kill Bruin.

The uninitiated may not be aware that a bear trap is never fastened to anything immovable; for if such were the case, the captive would gnaw his foot off to obtain freedom. On the other hand, if he can drag along whatever it is secured to, he will not resort to such a cannibal device.

The pole to which I had attached the chain on this occasion could not weigh less than one hundred pounds, and must have been eleven or twelve feet in length; but for all that more than two miles we followed its track through brush, swamp, and woodland, Sugar leading the way, not because he was a better tracker, for any one could have made out a trail so apparent, but because his eyes were keener, and,

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consequently, he would detect the presence of the enemy sooner than I should; for if not cautious we might possibly run upon the brute, so as to be at close quarters with him before we were aware, and fight under such circumstances he was certain to, from the ruffling his temper had received from his movements being impeded by such a painful attachment.

I felt convinced from the commencement, from the route Bruin had selected, that he was endeavouring to make his way to some caves on the edge of the river, probably the place where he had slept through the inclement weather of last winter; but to reach these must of necessity take some time, for constantly we observed places where the pole had jammed, such being apparent from the bark being rubbed off saplings frequently feet apart; and, of course, when such occurred, the ultimately outwitted marauder must have halted to disengage the remorseless anchor.

I have heard, and I believe its truth, that a bear will frequently, when trapped, take the pole in his mouth and carry it, so as to prevent his escape being checked, or the teeth of the trap caused to further lacerate the flesh of the part on which it is fastened.

We had almost gained the margin of the river,

at a place where the trees were less numerous, and the brush thinner than was generally the case, when Sugar gently glided behind me, and pointed to the bear, who had turned back on becoming cognisant of our approach, an indication that he was determined to give us battle. I had only time to say to the boy "Have the other gun ready," when offensive action became unavoidable; for Bruin was advancing rapidly upon me, although dreadfully hampered by the stick that dragged behind him. No craven was this animal, it could be seen at a glance, for his black lips curled up, exhibiting a most useful, but still disagreeable set of teeth, while the small eyes expressed excess of rage. Somehow or other—possibly it resulted from nervousness—my first barrel exploded before I had obtained a satisfactory aim; still it smashed the left thigh. But this warning did not intimidate my foe, for, crippled and manacled as he was, he charged upon three legs. My second shot caught him at the back of the head, and passing into him longitudinally, for a moment caused him to stagger, so that I fully concluded he was about to fall, when, with a convulsive effort, he rallied himself, but the delay had enabled me to change guns. Up almost perpendicular rose the bear; all his energy seemed to be concentrated in a last grand rush, but the movement

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exposed his breast, and the third shot deprived him of life.

My prize was a magnificent animal, for he was not only in perfect condition, but possessed a splendid coat, and, although judging of dead weight in such an instance is very probable to be erroneous, I should think must have weighed close on five hundred pounds.

How the dog could have got into one trap and the bear into the other was long to me a matter of wonder, but the elucidation that appears the most probable is that Skye struck the bear's trail, overtook him nosing about the bait, and then attacked him.

This put Bruin on his metal, and caused him to forget his habitual caution, so trod upon the trap; at the same time my favourite, unsuspecting of danger, while keeping up the war had the misfortune to get into the other.

On reaching home, I found Cariboo, the old chief, and Saucy waiting for me. All commiserated with me on my loss, for the Indians, although generally very cruel to their own dogs, had taken a great liking to my pet. While we were shooting together, I remember the old chief saying to me one day in his broken lingo, when Skye had done something to attract his

attention, "White man's dog know far more than Indian dog, all the same as white man know more than Indian."

In the morning, on the sunniest part of a bank that overlooked the river, close to the birch-tree under which we usually drew up our canoe, I ordered Sugar to dig a grave, I taking upon myself to hew out a coffin from a log. Saucy saw my proceedings, but said nothing. Soon after I had commenced work, she disappeared into the woods. I thought that she had departed for home, although it was unusual for her to do so without saying good-bye. At noon, however, she returned with several rolls of birch bark. This did not attract my attention particularly, for the squaws are ever making something out of it, birch bark being to Indian women what Manchester goods are to English; but when I returned from fishing at sunset I learned the reason of her temporary desertion, for the bark she had sewn into a tiny coffin, and placed on my bunk with the faithful little companion of my travels in it. With feelings of gratitude deeper than I could express—for here was an attention as delicate as it was touching, one well worthy to have emanated in the bosom of the daughters of civilisation—I turned round to thank her. She was not upon her customary seat

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in the corner as I expected, it being occupied by her father, sucking, with loud expressive puffs of satisfaction, his favourite pipe. So I asked what had become of her. The old chief said nothing, did not even raise his eyes from the glowing bowl; but Cariboo answered, "She have gone home to camp long since."

After a moment's thought, I was glad that it was so, for, in spite of her ragged clothes and copper-coloured skin, I feel convinced I should have thrown my arms around her, and—kissed her.

No one was invited to the funeral, still all that spent that night within my shanty came. Skye was deposited a good three feet beneath the soil, and not a word was spoken while the ceremony was performed, and seldom could an assemblage of sadder faces be seen. Even Poteen's countenance had an expression that almost said, "I grieve for my dead comrade."

Next day I planted a birch sapling over the mound, trusting that it may flourish, and in years to come droop its graceful limbs over the last resting-place of a true and noble heart, as if weeping that poor Skye had ever yielded up his generous spirit.

For some days after I was *distract*, so scarcely left the house. The old chief and some of his people

who had come to look after him had returned to their encampment, loaded with bear's-meat, a prize which they most highly valued. Cariboo was also absent trapping, in which he had been meeting with more than ordinary success, so, with the exception of Sugar, I was entirely alone.

Rain had fallen in the morning; not your heavy downfalls, but what in spring would be called a gentle growing shower. By noon it cleared up, so I took my rod and went to the river. I scarcely ever remember to have seen the fish rise more greedily, and all were of such a size that their landing lost me many minutes. One that I had taken, and which was more magnificently marked than any of the others—and so had delayed laying aside, the longer to admire its beauty—was full of spawn, so near maturity that it escaped upon my hand. Previously I had imagined that the spawning season would not commence here for several weeks to come, as is the case further to the south. Temperature of water undoubtedly controls all these matters, and, when such is known to be the case, for the proper protection of breeding fish, the close season in settled countries should be made to suit each individual river.

On my return to the shanty, to my very great sur-

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prise, I met Antoine, also Cariboo; from the countenance of the former I knew that he was in anything but an amiable temper. After giving him a kindly welcome, I asked him several questions, but he only answered me in monosyllables, and looked if possible more black and sulky. Behaving as if he was not present, I ate my evening meal, chatting alternately with the Indians; but conversation did not flow fluently, there was a wet blanket hanging over all our proceedings. At length the food was removed, and, after I had lit my pipe, I inquired in loud if not peremptory tone, what was his reason for deserting me so long, how his trade had prospered, and whether he had enough furs to pay me for the powder, lead, and gewgaws I sold him previous to his leaving.

"Pay you!" he exclaimed. "Pay be d——d! that game is played out."

"Not at all. You shall give me back my property, or their value in furs."

"What if I won't—what then?"

"Simply, I'll make you."

In a moment he jumped to his feet; an instant after we had hold of each other. As we struggled, my eye caught the flash from the blade of his knife which he was attempting to draw; so I seized his wrist, gave it a jerk, which disarmed him, then hit

him straight from the shoulder, knocking him over the kettle containing the boiling hot remains of our meal, ere he measured his length upon the floor. That he was severely scalded I had not the slightest doubt, but, from the boasts I had heard of his making, "how he had cheated the Englishman, and how he would cut his guts out if he interfered with him," I was resolved to give him a lesson that would not soon escape his memory.

My advice to all is, always avoid a row, but if compelled to fight, do it with a purpose ; half-measures on such occasions are perfectly useless.

But to refer to Antoine. After some minutes I picked him up, for he was still insensible or playing 'possum, carried him to the place where the ashes and *débris* from the shanty were deposited, and there dumped him, giving him a parting kick in the ribs to recal his scattered senses.

An hour afterward Sugar had occasion to go out. The hybrid Frenchman was gone.

When the whole scene was over I regretted it taking place, but I felt that I had acted rightly if I desired to uphold my standing in the neighbourhood.

The Indian lads had never seen me lose my temper before ; I feel convinced they never wished to witness it again.

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As I was turning into my bunk Cariboo said, "I tell you long since Antoine bad man. Now you know he very bad man." The boy echoed his opinion, and in the mouth of a multitude of witnesses there is surely truth.

CHAPTER V.

September 24.—For several days after this scene with Antoine, I was thoroughly upset, for I felt convinced that as now open hostilities had been declared between us, that the war would last indefinitely, and that he would stoop to any step to gain revenge, so that I should be compelled for self-protection to exercise the greatest vigilance. Quarrels such as this are much to be repudiated, for in wild countries, where might is right, they too frequently terminate in bloodshed; and although I should feel justified in taking a fellow-creature's life in defence of my own, still such an action—the sending a human soul to its last account when probably totally unprepared to meet its judge—cannot but for ever after be a source of the deepest regret. Through the Indians, I have heard that, after he left my shanty, he proceeded to the old chief's camp, and vowed by all the saints in

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the calendar that my heart's blood alone would satisfy his craving for revenge. The chief's regard for me and dislike to the French-Canadian, induced him at once to espouse my quarrel and order the fellow's immediate departure. To fight against such odds for the present, Antoine unquestionably thought imprudent, so turned his steps northward, doubtless to the residence of the Indians with whom he had been trading—a benefit resulting from the course he had adopted being, that at least for the present the neighbourhood is quit of him.

The weather now is truly delightful, such days and nights of cool breezes, bright suns, blue skies, and mellow moons, as cause regret for the loss of time passed in sleep, and indent their remembrance upon the memory, there to remain till decay has deprived the system of its service. Thus all my time is spent out-doors, and not a moment passes unoccupied, for, turn where you will, gaze aloft, into the forest, across the river, objects of deepest interest and fit subjects for thought and study present themselves. Although I confess to have studied the animal more than the vegetable kingdom, it is not that the former is more wonderful than the latter, but that my taste and sympathies are more appealed to by it, still I love the graceful, waving, ever-changing trees, merry or sad

with the seasons, silent or musical as the winds command. Every tree around my clearing I recognise as a familiar friend; and, although the cruel axe daily culls from their numbers, still it is with regret I see the destruction take place that it is impossible to avoid. And in the fall of these giant children there is something so grand, so heroic, that reminds one of the gallant dead who died in harness and with their faces to the foe.

Although not very abundant in this immediate vicinity, the giant among trees of these latitudes is doubtless the white pine. On firm, dry soil it only grows, and where found in numbers, underbush of no description cumbers the ground, so from the delightful subdued shade it yields, and no impediment to man's feet, except the various and always beautiful ferns that cluster about its roots, its groves form the choicest of camping grounds.

To the east, and throughout more settled districts, the lumberman has long despoiled the forests of their choicest specimens, for unquestionably they are a prize valued far above all compeers, but it is to be hoped that many a year will yet have to come ere this favoured region has its hills, vales, rivers, and lakes insulted by the cruel echo of the woodman's axe. Many specimens of the white pine, as certain

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as I possibly can be without having measured them. I have seen a hundred and forty feet long ere a branch was thrown out, while the stem was perfectly straight. As the top of a ridge or the edge of a precipice is a favourite site for this mammoth to select, they thus often form a favourite landmark for both sportsman and lumberman, and the traveller entering a new and unknown region may save himself much trouble, if not actual danger, by noting by compass the bearing such a tree has from his encampment. In magnitude the hemlock ranks next, but, from invariably growing in low, wet land, is seldom seen to advantage; more, its stem at the base is surrounded by innumerable varieties of brush and parasitic plants, all calculated to detract from the appearance of elevation. It also has suffered much at man's hands, for the strong astringent qualities of the bark have induced its adoption for tanning in place of that of the time-honoured oak.

The hemlock appears to be a great favourite with both birds and quadrupeds; the ruffed grouse and Canadian grouse delight in its branches as a roosting place; the woodpeckers, passenger pigeons, cat-birds, and even blue jays love its shade during the noon-day sunlight; while over its mossy damp roots the tracks of the variable hare will be found intersecting

each other in a perfect labyrinth. While living in Maine, one of these trees grew so close to my residence that the branches touched the window-sill of my bedroom in the top story of the house. This tree ever appeared to have several squirrels secreted in its branches, who, the moment my back was turned, would be into the chamber, and turn everything—papers, fishing-tackle, pipes, &c.—topsy-turvy; and although these pranks occasionally at first tried my temper, I ultimately reaped a reward, for soon the little mischiefs became so tame that they performed all their vagaries when I was in the room, sometimes of a morning presuming so far as to run over the bed or perch on the top of its canopy. In due time a couple of baby squirrels were brought by their parents and introduced to me; very timid were these pretty little things at first, but soon familiarity gave them confidence, and in time, I believe, I could have induced them to have eaten out of my hands. This I learned from the experience I am narrating, that squirrels are most affectionate parents, at the same time exact perfect obedience from their offspring. In this hemlock was also the nest of a cedar bird, American representative of the Bohemian chatterer—one of the prettiest of the feathered race and most charming melodists of the western forests. Here was

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reared their family, to depart south with the advent of winter, and possibly the next year, if no mishap befel either, to return once more to the old nest in the favourite hemlock-tree.

But there are numerous other coniferous trees in this district beside those I have mentioned: black spruce, white spruce, the silver-fir, and balsam; all equally beautiful, and lavishly doing their duty to give attraction to the landscape. Nor are the hardwoods less worthy of appreciation and admiration; the beech, elm, maple, and birches worthily uphold the fame their *confrères* have gained in Europe—I am not sure, but add to their reputation at this season when they first have changed their foliage to every conceivable variety of brilliant orange, scarlet, or yellow. In the river, several hundred yards beneath the shanty, there is an island nearly an eighth of a mile long, its most elevated portions are rocky, with rich alluvial soil edging upon the stream. Here the dark coniferii form a ridge of emerald green along its centre, while the deciduous trees, gorgeous in orange and scarlet, make a deep fringe around them—an emerald set in the most refulgent of burnished gold—the whole surrounded with the merriest, mischief-loving water, at one time leaping aloft in snow-white spray, at another swinging round

in treacherous whirlpools, or reposing in placid deep blue pools. At the lower end of the island is a shallow of trifling extent ; it is caused by the wash carried down by the current on either side of the island's shores, depositing the *débris* here. As the water is almost stagnant, over its surface has grown a quantity of different descriptions of water plants, the broad-leafed lily being abundantly represented. To those that know the habits of wild-fowl, they will scarcely be surprised to hear that this little retreat is seldom without several, so it is often my pleasure to pop down suddenly upon them. Such visits have their charm at this season, but when the wild-fowl had just hatched their broods, and the little progeny more resembled bunches of fluff and down than animated creatures, to suddenly show myself at this nook was a treat, for no sooner would the vigilant parent bird become aware of the presence of an intruder, than sounding her note of alarm she would dash off for the open river followed by all her youthful brood, who, in their anxiety not to be left behind, half-swimming, half-walking, would struggle first across water-lilies, then force themselves over tangled flags and rushes, under, over, any way to get forward, comical in their haste, ridiculous in their energy, till the open rapids and spray-covered stream was reached, where they would bob about

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About ten days had passed since the departure of Antoine, when one evening, as I was carrying in a stock of firewood for the night's consumption, I was surprised to see a canoe slowly toiling up against the current. In it were four Indians, who evidently, from the deep draught that their birch-bark drew, had as much to do as they could accomplish. At first I imagined that they were some of my neighbours, but as soon as they had approached sufficiently close for their features to be distinguished, I saw that they were strangers.

From my having remained still, I had not been observed, so when I hailed them, just as they were abreast of my position, with a start of surprise, each instantly looked towards me, and the heads of two persons, who had not been previously seen, were raised over the gunwale. At a signal of invitation for them to land, the canoe bow was soon pointed for the shore, and in a moment after touched the beach. Hastening forward to give a welcome to the visitors, what was my surprise to see that a white man and woman were among their number. In such a strange meeting, and so thoroughly unexpected, it would be impossible to say who looked the most astonished;

however, I did not permit my surprise to cause me to forget my hospitality, so gave them a welcome as hearty as sincere. Of course, for them to go further that evening could not be permitted, but a moderate amount of pressure was required to induce them to remain ; this I successfully applied, and soon had the weather-beaten travellers under my roof.

Weather-beaten they were in every sense of the word, and but for their features and some peculiarities of costume, might have been mistaken for Indians.

The lady, in deference to her sex, I will describe first. She was rather over ordinary height, with an inclination to be stout, and, although considerably over forty, had that in her features denoting the past possession of beauty ; but her eye was one of the most expressive I have ever seen, for it appeared to denote every possible quality, vivacity, thought, courage, and intellect. Her costume, which was composed of the commonest material, was made after the Indian pattern, slightly Europeanised, the whole being covered with a cloak made out of a dark-blue blanket.

Grace is inherent in some women, dress them as you will they ever look attractive ; so it was with this lady, and as she walked from the beach to the house, Gibraltar and the gliding señoretas of Andalusia

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were recalled to my memory. How often are contrasts seen between man and wife; in this instance it was very marked, for the husband was tall, thin, angular, and awkward, yet there was an air of gentleness, coupled with resolution, that would induce the timid to trust and the bold to respect him; more than his wife, he had adopted the Indian costume; in fact, the only thing in his apparel that denoted his European descent was the white neckcloth, which, although clean, looked as if long unacquainted with starch or smoothing iron.

It is scarcely polite to ask strangers immediately on meeting them who they are and where they come from; but I was not long kept in ignorance. My guests were Germans returning to civilisation after sojourning for twelve years as missionaries among the Indians of the most distant north-west. In all that long period, except what they could learn from the clerks of the Hudson's Bay Company, they had no communion with the outer world. What self-denial, what belief, what faith, does not such conduct as this manifest? and how very few are there among us who, even in the Creator's service, would permit themselves to suffer such banishment; still this worthy couple alluded without regret to the past, and with cheerfulness referred to their return. Both

spoke and read English imperfectly, but quite intelligibly, so we soon were engaged in what to me was a most interesting conversation. No wonder that they were weather-stained and travel-soiled; over two months they had been upon their journey, and I was the first evidence they met that they were approaching civilisation. The descriptions that both gave of the scenery and country they had passed through made me wish that the season was earlier, and my supplies sufficient to have extended my tour into it, for not only were the inhabitants totally unacquainted with white men, but game and fish abounded; however, winter in that lone land, which lasts three-fourths of the year, must be a dreary period indeed, for the weather is frequently so severe that for weeks at a time it is impossible to leave the shelter of your dwelling.

The next day after my visitors' arrival, being Sunday, a circumstance that I was almost unaware of, I succeeded in inducing them to postpone their departure till the morrow. The news of their advent had reached the Indians at the lake, so by sunrise there was quite a levée assembled, and as several understood a little English, the missionary thought it an opportunity not to be lost for a word in season. I fear I was the only one that profited by his zeal, and that was only in a partial manner, for frequently I

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could not understand entire sentences from the imperfect manner that he spoke my native language. This, however, did not prevent his audience listening with devout attention, and the grave, serious look of the Indians would have done honour to any congregation. This German was much to be admired, and exactly the type of person that should be selected for the life he led, for he was devout without being fanatical, earnest yet not harsh, an excellent mechanic as well as a scholar. In fact, just such a person as I have imagined our own Livingstone to be, judging from the descriptions I have heard of him on the banks of the Clyde from those who knew him in his early days, and long ere he was so widely known to fame. Over our pipes, for he was a great smoker, and seemed to appreciate the quality of my supply, he narrated to me one adventure that showed that, although by choice a man of peace, he still could be, if emergency demanded, a man of war.

A couple of years after his arrival among the Indians, where he had established his mission, some strange natives came to visit him. His apparently utter defencelessness induced them to form a plan of appropriating his property. An opportunity presented itself to the Red-skins, at least they thought so, by my guest and his wife going out together to

obtain a supply of fish. But before his reverence had been long engaged, an accident happened to his tackle that induced his return home; to his surprise, on entering the hut, he beheld half a dozen savages preparing his effects for immediate transportation. Detected, the thieves did not disguise what was their intention, and were now prepared to carry it out by force. The good man argued with them, pointed out the heinousness of their conduct, their injustice to himself, who had never robbed them; but all was vain, and insolence and threats were returned, so as he expressed it, "although a soldier of Christ more forcible means had to be adopted than generally employed by them." So he seized a club that had been a broom-handle; his foes, nothing loth, met him, and hard and fast became the fight, his knowledge in fencing serving him good purpose. Early in the scrimmage two got knocked down, but affairs looked still doubtful when the doctor's wife arrived, and her presence turned the tide of battle into an ignominious hasty retreat.

At length the day of rest was spent and Monday came—a calm, bright, joyous morning; in fact, exactly such a one as would tempt the most inveterate opponent to locomotion to be up and going, so the longer to enjoy the society of my new friends,

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I determined to accompany them to their first halting-place, pass the night with them, and return by land on the succeeding day. Before starting, although it was not without many protests against my liberality, I was delighted to be able to supply them with one or two trifling luxuries and a fair supply of smoked venison and fish, for heretofore—up to the date of their reaching my residence—they were compelled almost entirely to depend for food upon what their Indians could procure.

One trifling gift I was able to make them seemed to be regarded with special favour; this was no other than the ordinary buhl spoon bait. The missionary had never seen one before, and in a moment recognised its importance as a food supplier during a journey which was nearly entirely by water. Although the spoon bait is a very simple piece of fishing tackle for the expert disciple of Isaak Walton to learn the use of, the tyro would immensely benefit by an initiatory lesson, so as soon as we got clear of the first rapid, at the entrance to a long stretch of comparatively still water, opposite what has long been known by me as Otter Rock, the line was paid out, and the hooks soon after became fast in a gallant fish; in an hour as many were secured as could be utilised, so we desisted from further slaughter.

The Indians who acted as canoe-men to my visitors I have so far said nothing about, for they had only been in the service of my friends a couple of weeks, their home being about a hundred miles to the north of our present position. In manners and appearance they much resembled the aborigines that dwelt near me, and, doubtless, were an offshoot of the same race, for their language, although not identically the same, was so very similar, that they conversed with each other with ordinary fluency.

Indians that belong to different tribes are generally as ignorant of each other's language as a Cockney costermonger is of German or French; this, possibly incorrectly, causes me to believe that our present canoe-men and the people around me are sprung from the same stock. They also possessed a smattering of the lingo of the north-west traders, which is a strange jargon of bad French and worse English, doubtless acquired about some of the Hudson's Bay forts. This was the third change of guides and canoe-men the missionary had made since his departure from his distant station, such course being absolutely necessary, as the Indian seldom knows anything of a country beyond the limits of their tribe's accepted demesne, and generally evinces the strongest antipathy to cross its boundary; nor is this to be won-

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dered at, for the whole race are so jealous of their ancestral possessions that a trespasser is apt to be treated with the penalty of death for presuming to encroach upon the hunting lands of another tribe.

From the description of my guests, the further you approach to the north and west, the less intelligent, and therefore lower in the scale of human beings become the aborigines, with the further characteristics of being more diminutive in height and less European in feature. The improvidence of these distant races has, doubtless, to account for this, for I am informed that, although there would not be the slightest difficulty in laying up supplies to last throughout the season when game and fish is scarce, or when the severity of the winter places an injunction upon going abroad, still every year they suffer more or less from a period of starvation. This is a fault of the Red-man everywhere—their universal motto being, let the morrow provide for itself. The thief who has been punished for his delinquency remembers his castigation, so fears again to be dishonest, or only is so when certain that he can be with impunity; not so with the Indian, although he has suffered starvation to the verge of death from his improvidence last year, he will be guilty of the same folly the next season. This pecu-

liar trait in the character of the aborigines of North America will do much towards their utter extinction when civilisation increases, and game in consequence becomes scarcer. With rivers and lakes innumerable that swarm with fish in such countless numbers that they can be gathered daily throughout the summer in thousands upon their margins, with reindeer every spring and autumn migrating north and south in droves that rival in numbers the migratory antelopes of South Africa, it appears incredible that the sparse population of this region should ever want for food; but so it is every year, and to such straits are they sometimes reduced, that even cannibalism has been known to have resulted.

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CHAPTER VI.

ON our voyage up the river we saw no large game; the reason for this being, doubtless, that the flies having ceased to be troublesome, the deer family have removed more into the uplands, but wild-duck of many varieties, principally the mallard, were most abundant, and in magnificent condition, which is invariably the case at the season when the wild rice is ripe. This plant is one of the most valuable wild cereals of the Western Continent; it grows wherever the water is shoaly and the bottom alluvial, provided always that the current is not too strong. All birds and quadrupeds that are not carnivorous feed upon it; even the Indians have their rice harvest, and gather it in large quantities. The grain is smaller and darker than the rice used in civilisation, but it is much sweeter and less insipid to the taste. I have often had it put in soup, and

found it a most valuable adjunct, while, if it is ground and baked after the manner of Australian damper, it forms a very passable bread. In England, where so much fuss is made about acclimatisation of animal and vegetable life, it is really surprising that no enterprising landed proprietor who possesses marsh lands or lakes and rivers upon his estates introduces it, for the result would certainly be an immense increase in his show of game, particularly of the migratory kinds. In the craw of the woodcock and snipe, birds that are by many supposed to live solely upon animal diet, I have found it; the wood grouse are so fond of it that they leave the quiet solitudes of their forest retreats and haunt the margins of the marshes to obtain it; while wild-fowl of every description are so partial to it for food, that while feasting upon this, their favourite diet, they forget their habitual wariness, and permit the sportsman to approach them within the shortest of range before they can be induced to flush.

After a severe day of toil to the Indians, and one, moreover, in which we had not made more than twenty miles, we reached our camping place about four P.M. Release from our necessarily cramped position in the canoe was a great relief, and although time was given to overcome our cramps and stiffness,

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soon a fire was giving forth its ruddy blaze, the kettle singing its most welcome song, and a shelter of hemlock looking invitingly for occupants.

Having a great desire to kill some venison, so that my friends might have a supply of fresh meat with them after their separation from me, I took my gun, and, accompanied by the missionary, strolled into the woods. Perhaps we talked too much, or paid more attention to each other's conversation than the objects surrounding us, for we saw no game, although on every side tracks were to be observed so fresh that they could only just have been made. As the shadows began to lengthen rapidly, we deemed it prudent to retrace our steps, which we had scarcely commenced to do, when our attention was called to a family of Canadian grouse dropping from a tree into a small space of comparatively speaking open ground. The better to observe them, we took advantage of some intervening brush, then succeeded in finding shelter behind a windfall. Not over forty yards severed us now from the birds, which were perfectly ignorant of our proximity. I was hesitating whether I should not fire at them, when my attention was attracted to an animal moving close by. In a moment after a bay lynx made its appearance, and, crouching with its stomach almost to the ground, rapidly advanced

towards the grouse. When within fifteen yards or thereabouts of them, with its limbs bent under it so as to be able to spring with greatest power, it raised its head over an intervening branch which had acted as its screen, and took a survey of the prey. Its eyes seemed fairly to glower upon the birds. In this position it remained some minutes with an intentness in its expression, a craving for blood, that was almost demon-like. More and more the lynx brought its hind legs beneath its body; once or twice it appeared to gather itself for the final spring, and as often postponed it. At length, with a bound that nearly cleared the intervening space, it dashed among its prey, and in an instant struck down with its paw one of the little family. Anything more brilliantly or rapidly executed I never saw; in fact, it was a masterpiece of the most skilful strategy.

I am almost ashamed to confess that I would have shot the animal, but my companion interposed, stating that it only played the part that the Maker had intended, and that as it was of comparatively little use to us, it would be a sin to deprive it of life. How seldom we think on these matters; how much better that we did so more frequently. I do not for a moment wish it to be understood that the extinction of vermin on an estate is unnecessary, quite the

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reverse, for there a comparatively useless animal destroys an immense amount of useful human food ; but here, where there was a superabundance for all, the circumstances were completely altered.

That evening, no lullaby or opiate was necessary to send us to sleep, for all were tired with the exertions of the day and the constant exposure to the fresh air, so whether the lucifees yelled, the wolves howled, or the owls hooted, no one in the morning appeared to know, so thoroughly had all enjoyed their night of rest.

At length our last meal together, possibly for ever, certainly for a long, long time, was finished, the sundry traps deposited in the canoe, and all was ready for the start, save the embarkation of the good old missionary and his devoted wife. Both seemed loth to bid good-bye, and deferred in consequence pronouncing it till the last moment ; but further pretext for delay became inexpedient, the old gentleman in consequence took off his cap, thus permitting his long, straggling white hair to float in the breeze, making him look the ideal representative of what he was.

"Before we sever, let me ask the great and good God, who has ever kept my wife and self from all danger, to take you, too, under his guardianship during your sojourn upon earth, and into his

fold when the hour to leave it has arrived. May God bless you."

Shaking hands with an earnestness seldom given to the ceremony in civilisation, I assisted both into their places, the canoe noiselessly glided over the sparkling stream, a wooded point of fir-trees soon it had passed, and I was alone, but with one of the pleasantest episodes of my life so firmly indented on my mind that it must ever remain verdant in my memory.

No, I doubt, and certainly hope that I shall never forget Carl and Breda Schmidt, and if they have all the prosperity and happiness I wish, then will they receive a full measure of these blessings. I have met a great many Germans, and the more I have seen, the more qualities to admire I have found them possessed of. As husbands, friends, foes, they are sincere, and play their part in all with purpose.

The association of such a person with any uncivilised race must have been beneficial in a double sense, first, to instruct and teach; secondly, to give its members an appreciation of the white man that must materially add to his safety when thrown among them. It is a great pity that there are not more missionaries like Mr. Schmidt; the reason being, that clergymen as a rule do not, or will not, comprehend

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that example is far more valuable to the unenlightened than precept. The success of that never-to-be-forgotten good man, William Penn, among the Indians, and the number of proselytes that he made to Christianity, was entirely owing to example, combined with tolerance of errors in those who were incompetent to distinguish right from wrong. Thus the early settlements of Pennsylvania received for years perfect immunity from the fearful scenes of massacre and bloodshed that marked all other parts of the Western Continent in its early colonisation. The tall, erect, and noble countenanced, weather-tanned man, by his side his wife, the patient, enduring, and fond partner of his labour, the graceful birch-bark canoe and its dusky crew, the bright, clear, rippling river, and the surrounding, silent, brilliant foliaged trees, would have formed no unworthy picture for the artist's skill, and one not unlike what I have seen among a collection of historical paintings that deck the principal public edifice in Washington.

By a straight line northward, with slight divergence to the east, my route home can scarcely exceed fifteen miles; but then the walking is rough, and possibly in parts swampy, so I no further give way to sad feelings or loneliness, but calling up Poteen, who is deeply interested in an attempt to investigate the

interior of a marmot's earth, or to get an opportunity to worry its occupant, leave the margin of the river and push forward into the timber. The characteristics of the country at first were nice rolling lands covered with beech, birch, and maple, intersected by innumerable rivulets, the soil appearing to be tolerably free from stone—an objection generally to be found in the greater portion of this locality. When emigration has swamped that portion of North America that is blessed with less severe winters than here, the exodus of the pale face will doubtless be directed hence, and what a change will come over the face of the land! The yellow oats, the russet upland hay, the verdant, closely-bottomed meadow, will take the place of the primæval forest, and the echo now seldom waked, and then only by hocking of the moose or cariboo, by the tapping of the woodpecker, the screech of the owl, or howl of the wildcat or wolf, will reverberate with the child's laugh, the axe's unceasing blows, or the bellow of cattle or bleat of sheep standing knee-deep in luxuriant pasture. How few are there who will not like such a picture, and wish earnestly that it was in their power to be among the pioneers that produce it; but let me tell the reader that a long, long time will pass after their advent into the new home—many days, months,

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years of unremitting toil and privation before the change predicted is accomplished, and then not one out of a hundred will live to see the desired result accrue from their days and nights of labour. It is the adage of "*sic vos vobis*" repeated again.

I am convinced, too, in addition to the other attractions of this neighbourhood, that coal abounds throughout the greater portion of it, and at no great distance beneath the surface. This conclusion I arrive at from having discovered a vein of no trifling extent cropping out by the river's bank.

With the passage of time, the day has undergone a complete change, for the bright exhilarating morning has given place to a dreamy, lethargic, hazy, still day—a specimen of the Indian summer in its greatest intenseness. In a modified form, Indian summer weather is truly delightful, but when it assumes the superlative degree, it is as much to be reprobated as the sirocco in the Mediterranean.

Little caring for the woods when under such depressing influences, I increased my pace with the hope to accomplish my journey as soon as possible. I had been walking about three hours, and in that time certainly traversed eight or nine miles, so should have quite accomplished half the distance home, and be entering a country familiar to my eye; still

all appeared strange. This rather puzzled me at first, but I consoled myself by thinking that it was caused by the distance being obscured by the haze; so continued my route. However, an hour afterwards, when I had got into a hemlock swamp of the very densest and wettest description, I began to feel convinced that my bump of locality was not so well developed as I imagined, so resolved, very much against my will—for I believed that I was almost equal to the Indian in finding my way—to consult my compass. First I felt one pocket, then another, but all was useless, I had forgotten it, left it at home, and that upon an occasion when I urgently required its services. Was not this most provoking? I can assure you I felt it so, but "what can't be cured must be endured," so I faced about and endeavoured to retrace my steps, so as to get out of the swamp as soon as possible. This I imagined at the time an easy matter; any person would be justified in thinking so; but it was quite the reverse; the more I walked, and, as I supposed, retired from the low-lying, wet ground, the further I seemed to advance into it, and the more intricate and dense became the undergrowth and fallen timber. At length, perfectly exhausted, and far from in an amiable frame of mind, I sat down with the hope of

devising ways and means of escaping from my dilemma. Although I had my ground-rug with me, and the means of making a fire, still I was far from enjoying the prospect of spending the night alone in these solitudes, so, to obviate so unpleasant a *contretemps*, I ascended one of the tallest trees with the hope of learning in what direction high, and consequently dry ground lay; but the haze seemed to shut in the distance with a veil, and entirely obscure the sun's position. More disgusted and more thoroughly realising the strait I was placed in, I descended, resolving as near as possible to keep a direct course and trust in Providence. The tendency that all persons have to walk in a circle of greater or less extent, when lost in the woods, I was quite aware of, so to know that I was not doing so, I lopped off an occasional limb, to mark the course I was taking, sincerely trusting that I should not again set my eyes on them. The solitude, stillness, and sombreness of the foliage had such a thoroughly depressing effect upon my spirits, that I ceased to wonder that persons in such predicaments often go out of their minds; I can imagine no more painful situation than mine, unless adrift in a boat, on a tropical sea, the water without a ripple, the sky without a cloud, and the sun pelting down upon the unfortunates

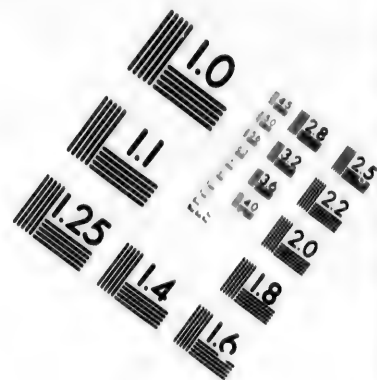
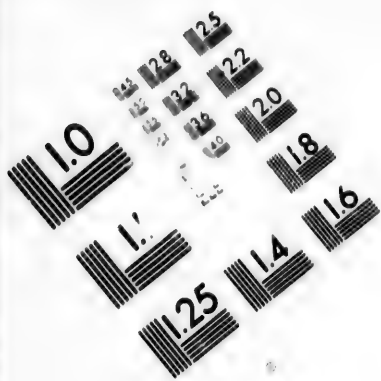
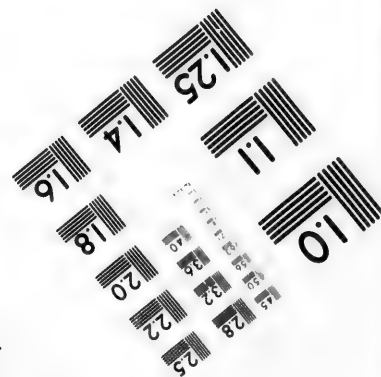
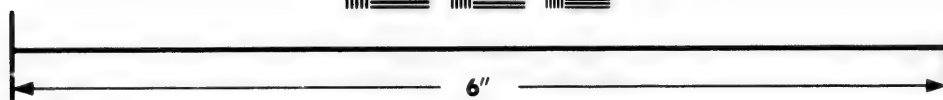
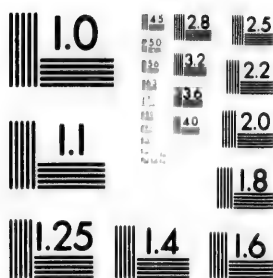


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its fiercest rays; it is one of such utter helplessness, where the brain or mind appears to be useless to assist your endeavours, and each sense to be at variance with the other. To get excited of course was absurd, but you have so great a tendency to become so, that one requires to exercise no small amount of moral restraint to prevent it; but if the wanderer should give way, first to run then to shout is his desire, both of which performances rapidly increase prostration, and thus deprive you of your strength, the very necessary that is requisite to save you. Hours had now passed, and not the slightest prospect of relief could I discern unless the haze that hung over the forest should blow off and the sun again become visible. But such was far from probable, for night, from the gloom and shadows becoming more intense, and the entire cessation of the notes and calls of the day-loving birds and insects, was apparently rapidly approaching. To be lost is never pleasant, but if it had been on the dry uplands, where I could have stretched my wearied frame upon the soil without becoming saturated with swamp water, or obtained an abundance of dry wood to make an invigorating companionable fire, I should not have had such cause for regret, but here, to lay down was impossible, and even if wood dry

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enough to burn could be found, there was no place sufficiently free from water on which to place it. There was but one misery to complete my unhappiness, viz., mosquitoes, which, although at this season almost unknown on the barrens and open lands, literally swarmed around me in countless thousands, and if I halted for a moment, attacked with such vigour as to intimate that they had been kept on starvation allowance, and were now determined to make up for their previous fast. Continuing on my legs so long, that from the increasing darkness I had almost dislocated my limbs over fallen trees, and broken my neck over standing ones, I was compelled to halt; a lately prostrated tree was beside me; against its trunk I leaned, wrapping the ground-sheet around my body to keep out the damp swamp exhalations. From my feet remaining stationary and supporting a portion of my weight, soon I was ankle deep in the clammiest, softest mud, which, now it had been disturbed, sent forth an exhalation of the most disagreeable kind.

I have seen it dark before, so dark that it was impossible to imagine more perfect Erebus; but here, under the thickly-foliaged sombre hemlocks it was so intense, that I almost imagined I could feel its pressure. My pipe had never been previously so valued, yet I was deprived of a portion of the plea-

sure of my smoke by not being able to see the circling cloud that arose from it, the glowing coal being the only thing to inform me that it was lighted. But the craving for tobacco, like the appetite, becomes satiated, so after a time even that solace was denied me. How wearying and interminable was that night it would be impossible to describe, and if I closed my eyes it was not to sleep, but to shut out the painfully intense darkness. I have often previously thought how monotonous and disagreeable must be the two hours spent in a sentry-box by a soldier at some out-of-the-way post, where no human being or animal life is near ; but my position was a thousand times worse, for no friendly relief could I expect to terminate my imprisonment, no dry sentry-box floor to stand upon. It is wonderful how a weak-minded or superstitious person becomes affected under circumstances similar to those in which I was placed ; even people brave as lions and fearing nothing mortal, from having listened to the absurd stories and superstitions of an old servant in their youth, grow up to man's estate with such an indescribable dread of supernatural beings, as to completely demoralise them. I remember well such an instance, although it is years since it occurred and is connected with another portion of the world, still I will relate it.

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While our troops were in the East, and previous to open hostilities occurring with the enemy, in my routine of duty I had to take charge of a subaltern's guard. The post of one of the outlying sentries was in a graveyard of immense extent, and densely planted with cypress trees. It was the custom of the people here to place very tall tombstones, ornamented with a head-like top, over the last resting-places of their friends or relatives. After the manner of Moslem countries, this burying-ground was so neglected, that these mementoes of the dead reclined at every conceivable angle, or lay prostrate upon the ground, while a dense growth of semi-tropical creepers grew in the wild profusion of neglect. As might have been expected, the jackals of the neighbouring country had selected this sombre funeral spot as a favourite haunt, and night after night held high revelry among the remains of departed mortality. In the midnight relief was a young soldier, his age about twenty, therefore but lately enlisted. In appearance he was tall and well formed, just such a lad as could not pass Westminster without being pounced on by every recruiting sergeant that chanced to set eye on him. Brought up in a sequestered valley in the north of Ireland, this youth had often listened to narrations of the superstitious population about banshees having been heard or leprechauns seen, and that the

voice of the one foretold immediate death, and the sight of the other serious misfortune. A change in the weather prophesied a heavy fall of rain, so the jackals, after the manner of their genus, commenced to make night hideous with their unearthly voices, and these animals were here almost as numerous as rabbits in a warren. About half-past one I went to visit the sentries; a quarter of an hour later I reached the vicinity where the lad had been posted; we received no challenge, the place and night were not such as would be likely to cause the recruit to fall asleep, so I possibly made more than a necessary amount of noise that he might become aware of our presence. At length I spoke to the corporal, who accompanied me, in a voice sufficiently elevated to be heard over fifty yards off, yet no challenge was vouchsafed me, further we could not see the man.

I became alarmed for the youngster's safety; Greeks and Turks, too, carried knives, and were known to have used them when plunder or revenge was to be obtained. Moreover, there are numerous fanatical followers of Islam who believe that by taking the life of a Christian dog they are insuring a certain passport to heaven, so, without further delay, we marched up to the post. Pale as a corpse, and with

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eyes distended with fear, there stood the lad; so demoralised had he become from the loneliness of his situation, and listening to the constant jeering and satanic howling of the jackals, that he had lost the power of speech or movement.

I should have reported the circumstance, but did not; my reward was to know afterwards, that in the field, where hard blows were struck and unflinching courage before a gallant enemy requisite, this lad bore himself as nobly as any soldier that carried a musket in his regiment.

Years afterwards, by a bivouac fire in the north of China, near the hour of midnight, a smart, handsome, non-commissioned officer might have been seen talking to me; on his breast were several medals. It was the hero of the graveyard thanking me for having spared him, and explaining that he really was not answerable for the inexplicable fear that had overcome him.

But, thank goodness, I was not one of that sort; possibly, if becoming oblivious to the passage of time was a desideratum, it might have been better that I was, for, although the period of darkness and light at this season are about equal, twelve hours appeared beaten out into twenty-four. The entire night, being compelled to remain almost in one position, from the

softness of the slimy soil, I was up to the knees in mud and slush, while the mosquitoes, doubtless considering that they were being thus deprived of a portion of their prey, massed their columns for attack on the still unburied part of my body; and from the manner in which they thrust their mandibles into me, if one could judge by feeling, not seeing, they must have been of no ordinary size.

The insect inhabitants of this swamp reminded me of a yarn which, I must say, I had long been sceptical as to its veracity. In a certain part of the United States, where these bloodsuckers were both numerous and large, a settler in the spring of the year took his axe and copper kettle into the woods to prepare a camp for making maple sugar. He had commenced tapping the trees when he was attacked by innumerable mosquitoes; every effort to drive them off was unavailing, so to save himself from being eaten alive, he ultimately reversed the copper boiler, and, axe in hand, got under it; but even here he was not safe, for the gallinippers disregarded his metal shield and forced their powerful bills through it, in the hope of striking ile by sticking them in their prey. Matters now became serious, and the prisoner commenced to think what was to be done in such an emergency. Of all people there are none so fertile

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in invention, especially when placed in unexpected difficulties. Now this settler was not one whit behind his race, so he turned round and prepared for action. With his axe in hand he waited his chance, and as soon as he saw a bill of the persecutors come through the boiler's bottom, there and then he clenched it. For three long mortal hours was he kept at this work; never was blacksmith's hammer plied more incessantly, till, poor man, he began to think that he had done the hardest day's work of his life. Thus he was just about giving out when the boiler commenced to move; slowly at first it was raised from the ground, more rapidly it ascended as it gained elevation, and, alas! the poor fellow saw his bran new pot rapidly going off for the next county.

It's an ill wind that blows no good luck. Some of the mosquitoes got tired; others had their bills pulled out, so just as they got across the county line they let the boiler drop. Abe Blunt—who was the biggest loafer in these parts, and had done so many bad turns to the would-be maker of maple sugar, that if that unfortunate had an improper wish, it would be that a rattlesnake would get into this unfriendly neighbour's bed or a bear chaw him up—was sitting out on the fence taking stock of his mint—for he was a rare hand this Abe Blunt at mint juleps—when down came the

boiler smash on his head, and the mint in his garden spoilt that year for want of gathering. Our settler was not uncharitable, he left the copper with the widow, and to this day she uses it for a sieve. My informant added, that anybody who was too darned particular to take it upon his word, had but to go to Bunkum, Illinois, and there could see the copper kettle.

But it is all very well to joke about a thing when it is over; that night, sitting in the swamp alone with the mosquitoes singing to me, was not a joke, and long before day broke, when the owls opened their concert proclaiming its approach, I rejoiced even down to the soles of my boots. At length the day did break, and light imperceptibly glided into day, for the same haze of Indian summer was upon the face of the earth. Not having eaten since the previous morning, I produced my supplies; fortunately they could be rendered palatable without fire, and humble and commonplace as they were, no sauce was required to give me an appetite. How fortunately are all these things ordained, for if, after hours of fast, and suffering from the prostration resulting from it, we were as fastidious in our taste and disinclined to take food, as we frequently are when leading a life of ease and luxury, how soon would terminate our powers of endurance.

Through all the night a most unhappy dog has been

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Poteen; this morning his countenance is wobegone, and his manner *distrain*; even the curl with which he was wont to carry his tail over his hurdies has now lost its stiffness, and no longer would be regarded by canine acquaintances as ornamental.

Although we shared pretty nearly alike at our morning meal as far as quantity went, he evinced his bad breeding by first gulping down his portion, and afterwards, while I ate my meagre repast, greedily devouring mine with his eyes. But I have long regarded him as a very common dog, in spite of all Master Sugar says to the contrary, and all the wonderful anecdotes he narrates of his intelligence, cupboard love is what his affection most appropriately can be called, and if it were not that the Indian boy was a warm bedfellow and a good friend to have in the kitchen, Poteen would not show a particle of partiality for him. A very dirty, unattractive pair of tramps we must have looked when we resumed our walk in the morning. I wonder what the police would have thought or said if we had by some enchantment been conveyed to a London suburb; probably they would neither have looked nor said much, but taken the fact for granted and run us in forthwith. Miserable as we were, there was no use sitting down under it; action was the only thing

that could save us, so with weary gait and fever-heated brow I pushed forward, scarcely hoping to escape from imprisonment, for no change had taken place in the appearance of the day, the same heavy mist still hanging over the woodland. As far as I can judge it must have been about noon that I came across one of the twigs I had broken yesterday to mark my position. By it I learned that I could not have so far entered the swamp as I commenced to suppose—a circumstance that I had every reason to be thankful for, because if it would only clear up, from the top of a tree I could have no difficulty discovering in what direction the high lands lay.

In all forests, except in the densest of swamps, you can generally determine the points of the compass by observing on which side of the trees the greatest amount of moss grows, for it is ever most abundant facing where the prevailing cold winds blow from, and as that in America is north, with slight variations of east or west, according to locality, a tolerably correct line can easily be made in any course. My position was much like that which the sailor is often placed in, off a port he is most anxious to enter, yet dares not approach closer from the thickness of the weather, so has to turn his ves-

sel's head seaward and wait patiently for friendly breezes to disperse the fogs. The friendly breezes not evincing any tendency to come, I looked out for the most suitable sleeping-place I could find, so that, at all events, I should not have to endure the torture of the previous night ; in this I was specially fortunate, for on a knoll sufficiently elevated to be dry, I discovered a windfall, the roots of which formed a most convenient couch, the open space out of which they had been wrenched being admirably suited for a fire. Nothing was to be gained by going further, so I gathered some dry sticks, started a flame, and so commenced housekeeping. You may rely upon it that there is nothing equal to a fire to make a place home-like, and my dog also thought so, for he as persistently blinked his eyes and nodded his head over its comforting warmth as I have done when seated at church on a Sunday in a too comfortable family pew. I have often thought, and I dare say correctly, that it must be intensely annoying to a parson to see members of his congregation asleep, while he is giving utterance to his carefully-studied and eloquently-expressed doctrines ; but this class are generally so mild in their nature, so much better than any others of the human family, that it is possible they do not suffer from that commonplace ailment inherent to

most persons, temper ; this is one of those fortunate provisions of nature, the adapting of men to circumstances, which we daily see and cannot help admiring. Still there are exceptions to the rule, for, if I am informed correctly—remember I am only writing from common report, but in the word of a multitude of witnesses there is generally truth—that when our marines had the misfortune to be landed on the mudbanks at the mouth of the Peiho River, in China, a certain worthy chaplain, who accompanied the expedition, preferred taking a sword in one hand and a revolver in another to carrying a Bible under his arm, and rumour further added he used the carnal weapons with as much skill as he usually employed the spiritual ones.

But for the mosquitoes and a certain craving in my lower regions, that plainly said my stomach had not lately been treated fairly, I dare say I should have spent a tolerably comfortable night ; but these trifles keeping me awake caused me to hear the most diabolical serenade of wolves, in which Poteen needs must assist. Why is it that dogs will be guilty of such folly ? for, by doing so, they inform their enemies where they are, in fact, almost give them an invitation to come and destroy them. These wolves were not baying me,

probably they were perfectly unaware of my vicinity, but fighting over some large animal they had succeeded in pulling down. Day at length broke; having nothing to make breakfast off, my start was not delayed, and I was able to do it in the lightest of marching order. My first step was to ascend a tree; the haze had completely disappeared, a clearer, brighter morning could not be desired, and strange to say, after all my wanderings, all my search, all the discomfort I had endured from wet and mosquitoes, high land covered with firs, and hardwood trees was within—well, less than a mile. However agreeable this was to learn, I could have whipped myself from very disgust that I, who prided myself on my knowledge of woodcraft, in my almost rivalling the Indian in my power to find my way, should have spent two days in wandering in a swamp and two nights a prey to mosquitoes, when within so short a distance there was ground on which I could have been comparatively comfortable, and very probably obtained a supply of game for food. Thank goodness in a quarter of an hour I was again upon dry soil, and never did man feel more thankful than when each step of my foot ceased to produce the response of splash, splash, splash, from the filthy swamp water. The adage, “it never rains but it

pours," was verified, for scarcely had I been on *terra firma* thirty minutes, when I knocked over a brace of Canadian grouse, and, through the assistance of Poteen, captured a porcupine. A continuance of my tramp was then postponed that the inward man might be refreshed, and during the intervals necessary in turning the roasting delicacies that were sputtering over a bright clear fire, I could not help regarding the disreputable appearance of my foot gear, which constant soaking had rendered almost totally unfit for the purpose it was intended; but in this out-of-the-way place, where no mortal eye would gaze on me, what did it matter, so long as my feet were protected from thorns and stones. It is wonderful how soon we become careless in such matters—how soon civilised man relapses into barbarism; a lifetime may not be long enough to make a gentleman out of a country bumpkin, but a very few years will generally change the most highly-educated man into the most perfect barbarian, even to out-Herod Herod himself. Thus, I once came across a person who had been living among the Black-foot Indians for nigh twenty years. An Englishman, he had expatriated himself on account of having accidentally shot his brother. Although a graduate of Cambridge, a gentleman by birth, few

could have detected him from one of the aborigines, so darkened and weather-beaten had his skin become through exposure to the smoke of the camp-fire and the sun. Moreover, he had forgotten to read and write his own language, almost to speak it, and report said, that no greater fiend was there in fight or one who craved more for scalps than this renegade. This latter I can well believe, from the numerous decorations each of his squaws wore, many of which, I could not help having a strong suspicion, had been stripped off white instead of red-women; but *requiescat in pace*, the deer hath been slain that has fed upon the grass that grew over his last resting-place.

Much restored in health and spirits, and with little doubt but that I should reach the shanty before night, with light heart and step I recommenced my journey homewards. The day was bright, the wind mild; in fact, an air of gladness was over the face of the landscape, and all animal life felt it. Again and again the short bark of the moose echoed over the ridges, while the querulous chatter of the woodpecker, now and then interrupted by his pecking taps, far from unpleasantly fell upon the ear; still, although I did not saunter to listen to these surroundings, or to note the doings of their pro-

ducers, to my surprise I still was in a country whose features were entirely unknown to me. The sun, we all know, sets in the west, so when there were but a couple of hours remaining before it reached the horizon, I directed my course towards where I thought it would dip, in the hope at least of reaching the river. For an hour and a half I pursued this course, when I found myself upon the edge of a swamp as dark and apparently interminable as that I had escaped from in the morning. The prospect of passing another twelve hours in such a disagreeable situation deterred me from attempting to cross it, so I retraced my steps and sought for a camping place. This was soon found, so much against my will I resigned myself to the necessity of passing another night from home.

I thought of the uneasiness my little Indian boy would experience at my protracted absence, and whether if Cariboo, or any of his tribe, were at the shanty, they would come to search for me, but the prospect of their discovering a person lost in such a boundless waste of woodland was as improbable as finding a needle dropped in a hay-stack. Although having every reason to be thankful that I had escaped from the wet, clammy swamp and its dank timber, I could not help growling at my own want of skill and forgetfulness in not having brought

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my compass. Many and many a time I caught myself wishing that I had the wings of a bird, or the limbs and sagacity of the moose, that I might with unerring power direct my course homewards, for I commenced to feel a kind of presentiment that my protracted absence might bode no good to my gear and residence, particularly if such an idea should cross the Indians' brains that I had continued with the missionary, and used his departure as an excuse for escaping from their country. The Red-man is ever suspicious, the daily experiences of their lives, watching the craft of the wild animals and devising means to outwit them, makes them so; and, although they could possibly find no pretext in anything I had ever done for founding the supposition that I had bolted, still my absence possibly would cause them to conclude that I had. My supply of tobacco has got to so low an ebb, that to-day I place myself on half rations; this did not interfere with my night's rest, for, although the owls commenced their *chanson* early and were manfully backed up by the wolves, I slept well, and did not wake till daylight, when I found the weather lowering and threatening, with something more than a Scotch mist descending, therefore again no sun was to be seen, and I must be guided in my search for escape by the mosses upon the trees.

Constantly descending rain, with every leaf and

branch loaded with moisture, is not conducive to the pleasure of a tramp through woodland, more especially if you feel uncertain as to your course, and have a strong suspicion that night will bring you no relief. I cannot deny having ere this felt depression of spirits and that sinking of the heart that ever precedes conviction that your situation is fraught with danger; but to-day it increased to such an extent that I refused myself rest in case the inaction should allow it to overcome me; thus I kept incessantly on the move, steering, as well as I could, a straight course, at the same time carefully avoiding being entrapped into swamps.

Towards the afternoon the characteristics of the country commenced to undergo a marked change, for the deciduous timber became less abundant and more dwarfed, and in many places acres occurred covered with nothing but a monotonous tangle of briers and brushwood. This alteration momentarily raised a hope that I had reached the barren, situated two or three miles behind the shanty, but the distance was so obscured by the drizzle and mist, that all beyond a hundred yards of my position was an unknown world, so that I might have passed within a comparatively short distance of a most familiar landmark without observing it.

Poteen, who has been for the last twenty-four hours a most unhappy-looking companion, obstinately refuses to do otherwise than trot at my heels, his ears flat to his head, and his tail—generally carried so jauntily—dragging behind him. I never had any great attachment to this cur, but never has he occupied so low a place in my estimation. Having come to a collection of boulders, whose outline struck me as familiar, I stopped to make a close observation of them; while doing so, the dog pricked up his ears and listened intently, the expression of his countenance giving evidence that what he heard was either familiar or pleasant sounds; for several seconds he stood thus, then slowly walked forward, stopped again for a few moments; this last halt had evidently decided his course of conduct, for he broke into a steady, resolute trot, turning his head neither to the right nor left, and rapidly increasing the distance between us. Immediately it struck me that I was going to be deserted; first I whistled, then called, but all in vain, my efforts obviously only serving to increase his celerity till he was lost to sight. Ceasing my attempts to recall him, I fear I hurled upon his ungrateful carcass everything but blessings. But what could it mean? either that the dog recognised his position, or that he heard

voices that he knew. Supposing the latter probably to be the case, I fired two shots in rapid succession, anxiously and with palpitating heart listening for a response; hope, fear, doubt, followed in rapid succession, till despondency ensued. Though chary of my ammunition, for my supply was getting low—and how much depended upon it—I again fired each barrel, but, alas! with no better result, and their echoes had not ceased to reverberate from rock and corry over ten minutes, when I renewed my tramp, for I could not endure the thoughts and fears that kept flooding my brain when I remained inactive.

It might have been an hour later, when I heard the short abrupt call of a bull-moose; experience told me it was the defiant note that the males so frequently utter at this season. At first it was not regarded with importance, but when it was several times repeated, and that so close that a few minutes' stalk would bring me within sight of the deer, I deviated slightly from my course, and advanced towards where I supposed the game stood. Having passed over the requisite distance, I halted to listen, but no sound could I hear that denoted the presence of animal life. Again I advanced, again stopped, but all was as still as if I were in an uninhabited world. At length a rustle, caused by the dragging of a

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brier, followed by a stamp made by a heavy hoof, broke the stillness, and a moment after I discovered the object of my search. So keenly was the quarry intent on listening to some distant sound, that, although within fifty paces, he was quite unaware of my vicinity. The attitude of the giant was grand and imposing; his mane and the coarse hair along his back stood erect, while every few seconds he tossed his ponderous antlers with the defiant air that denoted no knowledge of fear, or stamped his immense foot as indicative that he would crush into the earth all that disputed his claim to monarch of the waste. Sheltered by a rock clothed with a dense network of creepers, I watched with repressed breath what, to all admirers of animal life, was a charming picture. With a shake of the head, and holding his muzzle aloof, he sounded the challenge note; immediately it was responded to, the approach of the rival being at the same time heralded by the loud rustling produced by the rapid advance of a large animal through the brush. Gazing intently to where the sound emanated my champion stood, his head lowered, and body braced—resolution and indomitable courage being stamped upon his attitude; nor was he long detained in suspense, when a worthy foe trotted into the arena. The

new-comer was the taller and older animal of the two, but in development of muscle and flesh was inferior. For an instant each surveyed the other, then rising simultaneously on their hind legs, sprung forward with a rearing movement, and met with a crash, the impetus and power of which would have carried so heavy a body through a brick wall. As the contestants came together both fell on their knees; but now the action had commenced there was no receding, no shirking, both being apparently alike determined to die or conquer. The brow antlers were the tines that were altogether employed as weapons, and the strength with which they were warded off or struck into each other, with an upward sidelong stroke, was truly terrific. On one occasion the moose which I had first seen came to the ground from a heavy blow he had received; his right leg being bent under him, while the other was thrown out far in advance; but with a sudden action he succeeded in getting his brow antler under the flank of his foe at the back of the fore-shoulder, and with an effort that must have entailed the exercise of enormous strength, regained his feet, at the same time raising his rival almost entirely off the ground. Ten minutes of such tremendous exertion soon told upon both, for their tongues, covered with soil and blood, hung flaccidly

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from their mouths, and their eyes distended far beyond their ordinary size, appeared as if they would burst from their sockets. Prostration arising from the unwonted strain was doubtless the cause, for the strife now was entirely carried on upon their knees, and closer proximity of the animals to the ground made the earth, sod, and brush fly in every direction. Even a bull moose, possessed of all the vindictiveness and hate that these animals have for a rival, must succumb to excessive exertion and want of breath; thus frequent pauses now occurred in the combat; but these were only momentary, for a movement of either renewed the war with redoubled animosity, again gradually to cease from sheer weariness.

There had been an unusually long pause, preceded by a terribly severe struggle, both animals being at the time on their knees, when the younger elk managed to get his tine under the fore-arm of the other; desperate were the efforts here displayed, terminating by the older animal being thrown on his flank, the other at the same instant regaining his legs. The fight, I could see, was virtually over, for the prostrate warrior was again and again as he attempted to rise crushed to the ground. Youth, superior agility, and strength, had vanquished the veteran.

I have done many a foolish thing in my life, but none that was likely to cost me dearer than my present rashness, and past experience should have taught me better, for on the Yellowstone River, when, out of feelings dictated by the purest motives, I interfered to prevent a coterie of wolves pulling down a worn-out, effete, old buffalo, the return I got for my philanthropy was the old brute making a feeble charge with the ungrateful hope of impaling me upon its horns. But my assailant on this occasion was in all the flush of victory, health, strength, and maturity. In this wise it happened. Anxious to witness every strategy that was put in practice, leaving my gun behind me, I had thoughtlessly withdrawn from my shelter and approached the combatants. While the victory was doubtful, neither of the moose had observed me, but now that the battle was virtually over, the hero cast his eyes about him, possibly to see what fair one was there to applaud his prowess, in doing so his gaze fell on me. A moment's thought told me of my imprudence; without hesitation I turned to the right-about, and bolted for the boulder; well I did so, for a few instants after the deer charged past me. However, missing the object of his pursuit, he returned to search for it, when the first thing that caught his observation was his old foe regaining

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his legs. To spare the vanquished was evidently not part of his creed, so with lowered front he dashed for his late antagonist, but again to be foiled, for the veteran had risen ere he reached him, and from the deep crashing of the brush that ensued afterwards, was making the best use of his legs to get out of so dangerous a neighbourhood. Crestfallen, wounded, and humiliated, no longer was this hero of a hundred fights to hold his head aloft as monarch of the waste, but fear in every cracking branch, every heavy tread, the pursuit of his conqueror.

Without trouble I could easily have shot the remaining moose; but, although he had treated me so scurvily, I could not bring myself to cut off so gallant an animal in the hour of his triumph, and at the commencement of his reign over the barren and forest. If I had wanted food, it would have been otherwise, but the supply I had retained from my last camping-place was still sufficient, particularly as my faithless dog had deserted me.

CHAPTER VII.

OH ! genus *canis*, in thy race are characters to be found as diſſimilar as among genus *homo*. This may be accepted as a compliment to show how varied and innumerable can be reckoned their traits worthy of admiration. Let the reader misunderstand me if he will purposely do so ; but to be explicit, and crush all doubts upon the point at issue, I will further add that there are as big rogues, ungrateful sneaks, untrustworthy scoundrels to be met among dogs as there are among men. I do not know, still I very much believe, if an average in both races were struck of those possessing good qualities, but that the four-footed animal would take the palm, therefore, instead of debasing the biped by calling him puppy and cur, we do the reverse.

After all, Poteen had only deserted me in my hour of need ; a grave offence certainly, but not nearly so

heinous as if he had turned his teeth upon the hand that had caressed him—upon the companion that had supplied him with food and shelter; but Antoine not only had deserted, but attempted my life when I only demanded justice at his hands. Thus the bastard half-breed Frenchman was a greater scoundrel than the bastard colley; if either had been of pure strain, I doubt that their conscience would have permitted such ingratitude, so your hybrids of all kinds, unless it be between the horse and ass, are to be repudiated. Even the last-mentioned cross are not always to be relied upon, still their wonderful utility, hardness, and endurance, induces you to look more leniently on their faults, for their owners invariably receive a very large *quid* for a very small *quo*.

Since the death of Skye, I have tried very hard to shut him out of my thoughts, but, do all I could, I was unable to help comparing the difference between his character and that of the deserter. Had he, poor little fellow, been in Poteen's place, nothing, I feel confident, would have induced him to leave me; but fortune does not always follow the brave—his early fate, as the death of many a gallant youth, proves it. This night was truly a dismal one; my feet agonisingly sore from chafing, my garments as wet as it was

possible for them to be, while rheumatic pains kept reminding me that, after all, I was but mortal. However, I exerted myself, and built a large fire for the double purpose of warmth and to serve as a beacon if mortal eyes were within seeing distance; of this I had little hope, yet did it for that inexplicable reason that the shipwrecked mariner bales his boat, although aware that the frail craft in which he is buffeting about on the storm-tossed ocean, ships more water in a minute than he can free her from in five.

Painful were my thoughts as I cowered over the livid blaze, for never did a fire feel less companionable, and, though not superstitious when in health, I fear that I have become so, for the slightest rustle among the trees, or an unusual or inexplicable shadow, brought dread of lurking danger, and strung my nervous system to such a pitch that I could hear my heart beat. Is it to be wondered, then, that I could not sleep? Occasionally I might relapse into a drowsy state, but soon was brought back to consciousness by the horrid fancies that swamped my brain, and occasionally some of these would assume such a ghastly form, that I was compelled to rise, and by unravelling them, prove to myself, almost against my inclination, that they had no reality. After so long and tedious a night, day was hailed with pleasure,

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but, alas! the weather was again quite the reverse from that desired, for heavy fog with occasional showers were its characteristics; but it was more injurious to get soaked sitting than when on the move, so, in spite of sore feet, numerous bruises, and frequent twinges of rheumatism, I made an early start.

Now that I was out of the timber, there was nothing to guide me, not even a breeze, which, by constantly facing, provided it continued blowing from the same direction, a tolerably straight course could be pursued, so I feared my exertions were purposeless, and therefore unlikely to result in any benefit. Several hours I had thus been on foot, when a dull, distant sound struck my ear; at first it was so subdued that it might have been mistaken for the sighing of wind through forest trees, but this was impossible, for not the slightest current of moving air fanned my cheek. However, I directed my steps as well as I could towards where it seemed to proceed from, and more and more distinct became the noise. After intently listening for some minutes, I concluded it was the distance-softened roar of a swift rapid, and as I was unaware of any sufficiently big stream existing in this locality to produce such a volume of sound, except that which flowed by the shanty, hope of release recommenced to glimmer in my breast, so with quicker steps I pushed forward.

The barren ground soon gave place to open woodland of deciduous trees, which became more dense as I advanced ; this was cheering, for well I knew a rapid water-course would most probably be margined by such. The unknown noise now became so distinct that it was apparent I could not be far from what produced it, yet I began to doubt that its origin was what I supposed, for the song of the rushing torrent was far livelier in its cadence. However, I was not long detained in uncertainty, for, after pushing my way through sixty or seventy yards of hazel bush, I found myself at the summit of a precipice nearly fifty feet high, at the base of which rolled a heavy ground swell, breaking with great force upon a shingle beach.

It was impossible that it could be otherwise than the large lake on which my friendly Indians lived, thus giving me further hope of relief as soon as the weather became propitious.

There are few occasions in my life in which I have felt more grateful than the present, for I am convinced that a forty-eight hours' longer wandering on the barren would have deprived me of the power of further exertion, if not of reason.

Seeing that there was no perceptible breeze, the size and length of the rollers that broke upon the

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beach indicated a wide expanse of open water, and I had never heard the Indians, who dwelt near the *embouchure* of my river, speak of any other large lake existing within the bounds of their hunting-ground. Thus while the thick weather continued, I determined to remain where I was, so at once looked about to find a suitable camping-place. In my search I was successful, for on the edge of the beach I discovered a cave with a clean, sandy floor, and an abundance of old drift wood within fifty yards of its entrance. One thing certain, I should now sleep dry, and have a roof over my head—two blessings that the dwellers within civilisation do not half appreciate, for all their lives they have been accepted by them as a matter of course.

Taking the shore of the lake as my guide, it was impossible to lose myself, so I followed its course to the westward, with the hope of obtaining some game. In this I was successful, for barely had I been absent fifteen minutes, when I came across a large flock of turnstone plovers feeding among the wash of the receding breakers. From the total disregard to my presence that they evinced, it was evident they knew little of my race. Thus I got within such easy range that, at one discharge, I knocked over sufficient of their numbers to last me for a day or two.

Plucking birds as an occupation may be all very well for a poulterer's assistant, but for a hungry man anxious to break his fast, it certainly is a confounded nuisance ; however, after half an hour's patience, I had denuded five birds of their plumage, the number I considered necessary to supply me with a good square meal. Each carcass on a stick, placed at an angle of forty-five degrees, soon sputtered and frizzled over the clear wood fire, and were regarded with the most zealous care and attention, and far earlier than they were ready, supposed to be edible ; at length I could stand no longer the savoury odours that arose, so fell to with such a will that the whole were soon disposed of. Without much coaxing I could have repeated this gastronomical performance, and only desisted from attempting it by belief in the old adage, "enough is as good as a feast."

The Bruin family are evidently numerous hereabout, for scarcely had daylight disappeared when I heard an angry squabble, in which several appeared to be engaged ; but this did not deter me from sleeping. How and when I entered the arms of Somnus I know not, but of this I am aware, that the sun was high in the heavens when I awoke.

The scenery around me was remarkably pretty, recalling vividly to my memory often visited haunts on

the lower portion of Loch Lomond; but the distant hills were here wanting that add so much to the charms of that landscape. My position I discovered to be at the head of a large bay, girt in by abrupt irregular rocky cliffs of granite, fronted by a beautiful pebbly beach, and the water, now in a state of rest, glistening through innumerable twinkling diamond rays from its deepest blue bosom. In the offing were several islands, all densely clothed with wood, and reflecting large dark shadows, perfect photographs of the reality. "And can such a charming peaceful scene as this be unobserved by human eye?" I thought. No, it is certain that so fair a land and enticing water must long ere this have made the locality a favourite haunt of the Indians, for the Red-man, crude, ignorant, and superstitious as he may be, has a wonderful appreciation of all that is beautiful in nature.

While making arrangements for my breakfast—for I was engaged in the uninteresting pursuit of plucking some of the birds I had killed last evening—to my surprise a skunk, as self-possessed as if it was a domestic animal, walked past me, entered my dormitory, surveyed the ground, rug, gun, &c., and then advanced towards me. Cool assurance like this in a wild animal I never saw before; in a representative of any other race I should not have minded such con-

duct, but to have Mr. Skunk's society forced upon me, was decidedly disagreeable. To take my gun and blow the intruder to pieces was easy enough, but for two reasons I did not wish to do this; first, that the effluvia would have driven me to shift my temporary residence; secondly, that ammunition was now too valuable. It is unnecessary to deny that a skunk is a remarkably attractive animal in appearance; but, independent of possessing the power of producing the most fetid horrid stench, an even greater objection can be urged against it, viz., that, supposing it bites a human being, hydrophobia is certain to result. This circumstance has long been known in the United States and Canada, and therefore little surprise can be expressed at the war of extermination waged against them. Although the bite of the skunk has such a fatal effect upon the human family, it does not so operate upon dogs, for if it did there would soon not be a single one left in the agricultural districts, as the companion of man never loses an opportunity of worrying them, and seldom does so without getting more or less bitten. Believing in hydrophobia as I do, still I think that the number of persons that die from its effects are very much exaggerated, and further, that not one dog out of ten pronounced mad, and in consequence destroyed, is so.

When thinking on this subject it is difficult to pass by some of the absurd and antiquated ideas of the enlightened population of the present period. Thus the dog days commence in Midsummer, when hydrophobia (unknown in tropical countries) invariably shows itself in England early in the spring of the year. Again, muzzles of all descriptions, each out-rivalling the other in their inutility and powers of torture, are fastened upon Pluto, Bijou, or Cæsar, who, if possessed of the most even balanced brain previously, are certain to have it disarranged by being hampered with such an incubus. I have on several occasions witnessed an angry crowd of inhuman wretches bellowing with all the strength of their lungs, and throwing at the suspected animal every missile that they could lay their hands upon, pursuing an unfortunate dog. Such was but an evidence of the blood-thirstiness of our race, and the avidity with which they grasp an opportunity of giving vent to it, for the victims on each occasion I allude to had lost their masters, so anxious to discover them, and frightened at being deprived of their protection, performed their search in a hurried manner, when some fool or assassin advanced his belief that the poor creatures were mad; this was sufficient, the cry was taken up, when mobbed, beaten, and terrified,

the maligned were ultimately killed, after undergoing sufficient excitement to cause bipeds, let alone a dumb animal, becoming actually crazy.

But, to return to the skunk: it would neither go nor be driven away, the pleasure it derived from the smell of my cooking apparently overcoming all idea of fear, so as soon as I finished my meal I sallied forth, hoping my absence would induce it to change its quarters. After a tramp of half an hour I came upon the mouth of a splendid stream, which entered the parent lake by a channel cut through a regular wall of stone, the cliffs on either side being almost perpendicular and nearly nude of vegetation. In clambering along the rocks that margined its course, for I had now changed my direction inland with the hope of finding a ford, I had an opportunity of seeing a family party in all the privacy of seclusion—a sight so seldom witnessed except by the aborigines. It was in this way: I had ascended to the highest part of the rocks, and was carefully scanning the descent with the view of selecting the easiest route, when my eye was caught by the movement of an unknown object. In a moment I concealed myself, and from my hiding-place took observation, the reward being what I have stated. On a ridge at the entrance to a cave or deep fissure in the rocks was

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situated a shelf twenty odd feet long by twelve or more in width. On this, stretched in all the ease of indolence, enjoying with greatest delight the warm rays of the sun, was an elderly lady bear, and by her side two youngsters, almost half grown. A merrier pair of young elves it would be hard to find, or two that required more keeping in order, or were more prone to take liberties with their parent. At the numerous absurd antics each cut it was impossible to help laughing, and when for some more than ordinary breach of filial respect the culprit would be seized by his dam, and then and there severely punished, under less unhappy circumstances I would have become convulsed. The energy that was exercised in securing the disobedient child inferred to a looker-on that murder was about to be committed; however, it invariably resulted in a few good cuffs, a make-believe worry, terminating by the fond parent dressing the fur of the captive, the maternal relative while thus employed being again and again interrupted by the other darling playing some trick upon her. With the exception of schoolboys, I do not think there are any creatures so brimful of impudence and mischief as young bears, and truly they lead their parents an anxious life; thus, I suppose, arises the origin of the saying, "as hard to lick into shape as a young bear."

These animals all appeared in first-class condition and health, the gloss of their fur telling the latter circumstance. Their principal food is doubtless vegetable, but unquestionably, when opportunity offers, it is changed for venison or fish. In capturing the latter an old bear becomes exceedingly expert; and, although possibly seldom observed by a white man engaged in this pursuit, the greatest practical naturalists, the Indians, frequently see them. So to the Red-man is due what I am about to narrate of Bruin's sagacity.

The shoals and bars at the *embouchure* of rivers and brooks are always favourite haunts of fish. The bear knowing this enters the lake some distance below, and makes a detour by swimming or wading till he reaches within a short distance of the stream's mouth. With cautious slow step this he approaches, driving, but not frightening, all the trout in front of him, which, when they have reached sufficiently shoal water for his purpose, he dashes among, and seldom fails to secure the largest by a dexterous move of his paw, after the manner that a fisherman would use a gaff. The Indian dogs, I have frequently observed, practise the same *ruse*, not single-handed, but in a party of several, their mouth instead of foot, of course, being employed to secure the prize.

The other method employed by Bruin to take fish is to place himself on a tree reaching over a shallow connecting two pools, and as the trout pass up or down the rivulet, hook them out.

But to return to the bears I had been watching. Having apparently devoted enough time to indolence, and each of the youngsters had sufficient of their mother's care exhausted upon them to perfect their toilet, all got up, and descended in Indian file the face of the rocks, doubtless with the intention of going to seek their mid-day meal. I can imagine the life of Bruin in solitudes such as this an extremely happy one, for rarely does he suffer from scarcity of food, and as soon as the weather becomes cold and boisterous lays up in some snug retreat, there to sleep undisturbed through the long and almost Arctic winter. In autumn, previous to their retiring to hibernate, they are invariably very fat, but, on recommencing active life in spring, their condition has very much altered for the worse.

Meditating whether I should not retrace my steps, I chanced to cast my eyes lakewards, and perceived in the distance—so far off that I had to gaze several minutes before I could distinguish what it was—a canoe. The intervening space between me and it was too far for any signal to be useful, so I anxiously

waited, hoping that the crew might point its head towards me ; but in this I was disappointed, for it passed behind the western point of the bay, and was lost to sight. It, however, had scarcely been out of view many minutes, when I perceived another following in the wake of its predecessor, but, if anything, further seaward ; it also soon was shut out by the intervening point of timber. Those who have sailed on distant seas out of the ordinary track of commerce, have doubtless experienced the lonely feelings that are generally produced from looking day after day over a deserted ocean. True, you have the wild sea-fowl, and possibly the leviathans of the deep, in view, and the interest their habits awaken, for a time amuse, but the same intense loneliness, if forgotten for an hour or two, will return with redoubled power. At length, after days, perhaps weeks, of watching, a sail is seen ; with what inexpressible gratification you gaze upon it, for its appearance assures you that there are other mortals on this earth beside yourself—that no extraordinary convulsion of nature has occurred and destroyed the whole human family, excepting those embarked with you. Disappointed I certainly was to see the canoes continue their course till out of sight, but, at the same time, their appearance told the tale that others

of my race were within a distance possibly not over a day's walk, and consequently that there was a strong probability of my soon finding them.

Before returning to my sleeping-place of the previous night, I went down to a deep, still, sullen-looking pool, almost the last on the river before entering the lake; having selected a suitable wand for a rod, I tied my line to it, and, with a lizard for bait, commenced fishing. Soon I had a run, but, striking too sharply, my pole broke a foot or two from the top. If I had lost my hook it would have been a most serious misfortune; but luck stood by me, for as the tip drifted in the current, it jammed against a branch, which fortunately was within reaching distance. My fish and bait, however, were both gone. In a shallow connected by a narrow channel with the river I discovered a shoal of shiners. With a branch and some stones I cut off their retreat; but, although they were in immense numbers and confined within a space of twelve to fifteen square feet, so active were these beautiful silvery little fish, that they defied all my efforts to capture them, and that although the water was nowhere over a foot deep, and in many places barely six inches. With a landing-net I might have scooped them out in dozens; with a small-sized hook and diminutive

bait I might have caught them ; but neither of these were forthcoming. Thus my invention was brought into play ; first I tried to snatch them by rapidly drawing my large hook through their dense ranks, but the prey were not large enough for it to take hold of them. Having thus spent some time fruitlessly, a new thought struck me, viz., to drive them into shoal water and pelt their densest ranks with stones. In this manner I succeeded, and soon possessed half a dozen capital baits. Returning with my prizes to the pool, I recommenced fishing, and soon captured as many splendid trout, an invaluable addition to my larder. The improvement in the weather, the change of scene, the objects of interest I had seen during my walk, and my success in obtaining a change of diet, all acted favourably upon me, for since discovering that I was lost, I had not felt in such good spirits. In fact, during my tramp home, an inward monitor constantly kept whispering to me that the period of release was near.

The season was now so late that a fall of snow and cold weather might at any moment have been expected ; anxiously I prayed for its postponement, for the consequence to me would have been so serious that it was far from pleasant to think of. In fact, whenever I detected myself brooding over the possi-

bility of being snowed up in this lone land, I engaged myself gathering firewood, or replenishing the blaze; in fact, any active employment that would check my imagination hatching up possible misfortune.

I seldom enjoyed a meal more than that I made off the trout I had this evening, and after such the spirits ever rise; the weather, also, was all that could be desired, so I sat up late, and smoked my last pipe of tobacco, moreover, long familiarity with large extents of water, caused me to regard the vicinity of the lake almost in the light of the presence of a companion, so I did not feel so very, very lonely after all.

I resolved after to-night not to remain longer at my present encampment; my reason for this was, that from its being situated at the termination of a deep bay, it was out of the track of canoes going up or down the lake. Thus I would push forward on the morrow, and, if possible, gain the extremity of some prominent headland, from which I would keep a sharp look-out during the day, and a fire, as beacon, burning on it at night.

At this season the Indians, I was aware, captured the principal part of their stock of fish for winter consumption. This is done after dark with the spear and torch on all the shoals frequented by lake trou^t

and white fish for breeding purposes, so if from my next halting-place I should not perceive any lights on the water at night, I would change to another till I did, and then endeavour to direct my course by land as near as possible to their vicinity, in the hope that the report of my gun or fire upon the beach would attract the fishermen's attention.

Those that do not know the Indian in his native haunts, where, by their skill and assiduity in field sports, they obtain their support, can have no idea of the extraordinary precision and rapidity with which the Red-man handles a fish spear. Of all implements of fishing this is their favourite one, and from childhood upwards they are incessantly practising it.

There are two spearing seasons while the lakes and rivers are free of ice, the first early in summer, when trout and salmon are passing up the rapids; the other towards the end of autumn, when the lake fish assemble upon the shoal gravelly banks to deposit their spawn. In the first the greatest amount of agility is necessary, so much, indeed, that a white man, although brought up in the woods, never can become the red man's rival in it.

I have often, when opportunity offered, watched their mode of proceeding, and, although placed at the

spearer's shoulder, never could understand how he sees his prey.

Let the reader transport himself in imagination to the margin of a rapid on one of the wild north-western rivers; if the position be beneath a fall, so much the better, for the game will probably be more abundant and the skill exhibited greater. Such a sight I have at this moment under my eyes, and on a rock barely covered with water and surrounded by quantities of foam dancing upon the rushing eddying current, stands an Indian attended by his squaw.

Have you ever in your wanderings by meadow or loch observed a heron fishing? Have you marked its eager intent gaze and firmly set figure? Such is exactly the look of the Indian; and seldom does his spear descend without transfixing a struggling fish. For hours at a time he continues his labour, never ceasing, except for the moment that his squaw takes to release the captive from the barbs.

Spearing on the banks at spawning time is more exciting, more enjoyable, and certainly more picturesque. In the canoe is a vessel composed of hoop-iron, in which a fire is made of birch-bark, fir cones, or pitch-pine; from the power of its ruddy blaze, the bottom becomes as clear at ten or twelve feet as if it

were only so many inches distant. In each canoe there are generally two occupants, the paddler and spearer, and during the density of a dark autumnal night tremendous is the havoc made among the spawning fish. It is a cruel sport, and one which, if carried to excess, would soon depopulate the most numerous inhabited waters, still it is wondrously fascinating. I have tried it, and enjoyed it, as success was my reward, a quick eye and quicker hand being not so much a requisite as on the rapids, for the prey seem lured by the light into a consciousness of security that enables you with trifling practice to strike them with certainty. Another attraction is, that this fishing takes place during the glorious still nights of autumn, and on the same shoal will be numerous canoes, the flame from each lighting up the sombre woods, while the voices and shouts of the participants wake the latent echoes.

I had scarcely laid down when my old acquaintance, the skunk, made her appearance, the smell from cooking evidently being the attraction. Watching the creature's movements without pretending to observe her, once she came so close to me that I could have touched her with the muzzle of my gun. Gazing intently into my eyes, and scanning my features with that half-curious, half-impudent counte-

nance animals often exhibit, she evidently thought, after mature consideration, that I was unworthy of fear, or too insignificant to provoke wrath. I felt obliged for the valuation she placed upon me. Before laying down, I had thrown the heads and bones of the fish into a heap: these Madame Skunk soon discovered, and doubtless considered she had found a treasure. However, instead of beginning the feast with greedy haste, she purred over them as if enjoying the meal in anticipation. But this was not the case; even skunks have some good qualities about them. The purring was a call, for soon she was joined by a pair of young ones, about as large as month-old rabbits. A mature skunk in its strongly-marked black and white coat and scrupulously-kept fur is a very handsome animal; but these little ones were perfect darlings, and what charming pets they would have made if domesticated sufficiently to give up using their teeth or scent bottle on all available occasions. The parent was not greedy, the choicest morsels she distributed evenly among her children, and, although thus engaged in parental duties, it did not prevent her keeping a watchful eye upon me. However, sleep stole over me, sound and refreshing was my rest, so that when I awoke day had broken, and my nocturnal visitors departed.

Fish first and plover afterwards, not a bad breakfast, I hear the reader say ; my appetite would justify any one in coming to such a conclusion, for even without salt or pepper, let alone other luxuries, I managed to eat an enormous meal. Such a consumption of viands in civilised life would have shocked a looker-on, and gained me the reputation of *gourmand*.

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CHAPTER VIII.

By following the edge of the shore, with the exception of an occasional clamber over rocks obstructing my course, I had, comparatively speaking, easy walking, thus, in little over an hour, I had lost sight of the thin wreath of white smoke that marked the fire of my last resting-place. My course was constantly intersected by rivulets, few of them large enough to carry a boat or canoe, and all exceedingly shallow at their *embouchure*. Off the mouth of each, as if waiting for the rains to increase the volume of water, were innumerable trout, all apparently as hungry as sharks, and perfectly indifferent to danger. If means of communication with civilisation were less difficult, there is little doubt that most lucrative fisheries could be established here; but time, doubtless, with the never-ceasing tide of improvement and emigration, will obviate this drawback, as well as convert the neigh-

bouring grounds into arable lands. The latitude of my position cannot differ much from that of London. Clearing off the wild waste of timber that now covers the country will, in my belief, modify the climate, and when such takes place, this will become as fine a stock-raising country as there is in the world. The soil appears too cold and hungry for wheat, but that is no reason that oats, barley, and other northern cereals will not flourish. The climate also must necessarily be humid, from the quantity of lakes and streams scattered over it, which will increase the probability of its suiting the cultivation of bulbous plants.

In years gone by, the Green Mountains of Vermont were the favourite haunts of innumerable moose; now they are the finest and most extensive sheep pastures of the United States. In its early history it became a fact so well known, that it passed into an adage, that the habitat of this wild game was suitable for the rearing of domestic animals, thus the following lines, possibly incorrectly quoted:

“The upland and forest where moose are found,
For sheep and cattle are the best of ground.”

Here, again, is an instance of the bounty of nature to the human family, for where the giant elk ceases

to exist from the encroachment of the white race, his place is filled by other food-producing quadrupeds. It, nevertheless, appears to me a great pity that this truly magnificent animal, the elk, should be doomed to annihilation, for, doubtless, it could be reared in a domestic state, when it would require far less attention than ordinary farm-yard occupants, and could be made to perform the double purposes now allotted to horse and bullock. It is a well-known fact, that they have been broken to harness, and that their speed and powers of endurance far exceeded that of any creature known; moreover, bad roads would be of trifling detriment to them; all must know who have seen with what ease they pass over the roughest barren, or through the densest timber land. Exposure also would not affect them as it does the horse, and a severe winter night passed out of doors in no way incapacitate them from resuming their labours on the morrow. Greasy heels, sand cracks, and the numerous other ailments to which the equine family are so subject when neglected, are, I believe, unknown to the alpine race; at least, among the numbers I have killed I have never seen any evidence of its existence. For ploughing, their immense weight and powerful stride would make them invaluable, always provided they could be made

sufficiently docile to submit to such monotonous occupation.

But why should such not be possible, for how patient has become the ox, yet the race from whence he is sprung when running wild in their natural habitat, or those that have escaped for a lengthened period from man's control, are as shy and wary in their efforts to escape, and as bold and dangerous, if called upon to exert their courage to avoid capture, as any other race. The elk, born of wild parents, might be difficult to divest of its inherent love of freedom, still kindness and proper handling would assuredly do much to reduce it; but their progeny of the second, third, or possibly fourth generation would become, doubtless, as patient of control as the most commonplace old motherly cow.

I made such good speed in my tramp, that, by the time the sun had become vertical, I was nearing the point of land that formed one of the promontories that guarded the entrance of the bay. On that account was congratulating myself on my success, when I heard the sharp, quick yelp of a wolf apparently running game; in a few moments it was repeated, several others chiming in. Knowing the propensities of this family, I doubted not that they were up to some mischief, so halted to listen; nor was I long detained in doubt, for within a hundred yards

of where I stood a young cariboo broke cover, and, with a rush, dashed into the lake, and with rapid, powerful strokes soon placed a wide extent of water between himself and pursuers. A few minutes afterwards three powerful, full-grown wolves came out on the beach, wistfully they gazed with longing eyes after their prey, but did not attempt to follow. No; previous experience had taught them how futile would be an attempt to capture in the water one of the very swiftest swimmers among quadrupeds.

The disappointed gentry not having seen me, I had an opportunity of observing them *au naturel*, how wondrously dog-like they were in their actions. They had obviously had a protracted run, for all appeared much blown, thus a bath and drink of pure water were in great demand; so with legs stretched out at length, occasionally lapping the water with their long flaccid tongues, each did exactly as all who have shot frequently observe setters do after a long run. My course being past this trio, I did not choose to make a detour, so held it. The rustling of the sand and stones under my feet soon caught their ears, when they turned their heads hurriedly towards me, as if expecting the noise to be caused by the approach of game. However, my sudden apparition seemed in no way to disconcert them, for I was permitted to

approach within a very short distance before they deemed it necessary to retire; indeed, so little evidence of fear did they evince, that I cocked both barrels, from a doubt arising in my mind whether they were not considering if I would not be an acceptable substitute for venison. When they did go, they looked dangerous, for there was that expression in their eyes often observed in animals that are inclined to dispute man's supremacy, a look I have frequently observed in an insubordinate hound whose temper had got raised from being deprived of his prey, or made rebellious through an excessive application of the whip.

Feeling relief at seeing, what I thought, the last of them, and to make them believe that they were held in thorough contempt, I hurled a rock after the rear-most, which but for his agility would have given him sore bones, nevertheless it had the effect of making him hurry up his previously lagging pace.

From a secluded pool at the mouth of a stream I flushed one of that rare species of water-fowl the king-duck, his large double humped head giving him a most ungainly appearance. I have always believed previously that this seldom seen bird was confined to the Arctic regions, and moreover was strictly marine.

Of course, all know that one swallow does not make a summer, so it would scarcely do, on account of a single specimen being found in a previously unknown situation, to discard the experiences of authorities. The eider-duck, equally a resident of hyperborean regions, has been known as far south as the English Channel, heavy gales doubtless being the cause. Some similar reason probably induced the king-duck to be so far from home.

I seldom in my previous experience have seen so many great northern divers assembled on one sheet of water, as upon this lake; look where you would, their large black bodies loom over the clear surface, causing them to appear double their size. Moreover, their wild startling shrill cry continued to be echoed and re-echoed from every tree and crag.

This unusual muster of these far from common birds, and their disposition to babble—for as a rule they are not prattlers—foretells in my belief severe weather, probably frost and snow, things of all others in my lonely position to be most dreaded. But may the loons be false prophets and myself a croaker—"sufficient is the evil for the day thereof."

Crossing the neck of a promontory that jutted into the lake, instead of following the coast line at a place where the brushwood was unusually sparse, I saw

a wolf. The distance between me and the animal could not be over seventy yards, still there was in the creature's manner no evidence of fear or distrust. His course and mine apparently were the same, and he evidently had as little intention of relinquishing it as I had. However, there was plenty of room for both, and I had almost dismissed the circumstance from my mind, when to my surprise I saw that wolf number one was followed by two companions, about twenty or thirty paces apart, and from their looks and manners that I unquestionably was regarded with considerable interest. Of course, one wolf looks so much like another that it is impossible to be certain, still I felt a very strong impression that these three worthies were the identical trio who had been disappointed of a feast on venison in the morning, and if such was the case, well, they were dogging me with the intention of screwing up their courage, when darkness shrouded the landscape, to make a preconcerted attack, so sup on a lost biped, as a substitute for the lost quadruped. Silly things, how little they were aware that I could at any moment have disposed of their lives; but without firearms my position would have been anything but pleasant. With a good club or axe, unless a man was attacked simultaneously or unawares, I think he would have little trouble in

beating off two or even three of these disreputable relations of the canine family. If I had not felt the necessity of husbanding my ammunition, I believe I should have knocked over one, that his remains might submit to the indignity of being torn and gnawed by his comrades ; for although the negro adage says, "dog no eat dog, no never," wolf will eat wolf, and that with such gusto that if a stricken one only be but slightly wounded, his fellows will hunt him to the death as a pack of hounds will a fox. This circumstance is worthy of Mr. Freeman's attention, possibly his philanthropic mind might suggest to the race a remedy for such blood-thirstiness.

Again striking the edge of the lake, I most unexpectedly secured my dinner without having to employ my gun, so saved a cartridge. It happened in this way. The water was extremely shallow, and into it projected a broad spit of gravel on which grew a very stunted and sparse crop of rushes. Several northern divers, unconscious that any danger would result from such a proceeding, had left their watery home to rest and sun themselves. In a moment my eye detected them, and knowledge of their incapacity to take flight when on shore, informed me that by a quick dash I might succeed in cutting them off from their favourite element. Rapid as thought I made

a rush ; the birds amazed seemed unconscious of my intention until it was too late to save themselves, so I singled out the plumpest—always the easiest to catch—and knocked it over with a stone. The chase finished I looked up, and not forty yards distant were the rascally wolves coming directly for me at a good three-quarter gallop. In a moment I dropped the bird, placing my foot on its neck to prevent it escaping, and cocked both barrels to be ready if it was necessary to stand on the defensive. Never were rogues so disconcerted ; with surprise as thoroughly depicted in their features as ever it was in mortal being's, each halted, looked foolish, and in a loitering careless gait slunk off.

Now these worthies doubtlessly thought, when I made the rush to intercept the divers, that fear was inducing me to run and thus escape their pursuit, so having a frightened creature to deal with, they would without further delay run him down ; but they had calculated without their host, as the sequel showed. If I had been some timid, unarmed person, I doubtless would have been pulled down, simply from the want of showing a bold front. More than once I have seen a bull that would pursue all who ran away from his wild look and hostile actions, quietly

walk off, even abruptly turn tail and bolt, when confronted by a determined person. I believe there are very few quadrupeds that will attack man if he does not permit his presence of mind to desert him, at the same time it is wrong to say that none will, so it would be most culpable to unnecessarily put yourself in peril by a desire to exercise it, but if placed in an unexpected position of danger, when other means of rescue are not within reach, your life may be saved by using it.

That I had not yet done with my attendants the wolves was evident, for after placing about a hundred yards between me and them, they quietly sat down upon their haunches and watched with evidently most interested motives my movements.

But to my prize, the diver; it was a splendid young bird, in most perfect plumage, weighing upwards of twelve pounds. I felt great reluctance to destroy its plumage, as it would have made a valuable addition to any museum, but "needs must," &c. Although this bird is universally called the loon here, the appellation is erroneous, this specimen being the Immer or Great Northern Diver (*Colymbus glacialis*), not the Black-throated Diver (*Colymbus arcticus*); both species are, however, to be found in the same latitudes of America as comprise their habitat in Europe. Although report says that the

Immer has been known to breed in the north of Scotland, to my knowledge it has not been authenticated, while the loon unquestionably does on some of the secluded lakes of Sutherlandshire.

The red-throated diver (*Colymbus septentrionalis*), another of the same family, although far more common in Europe than either of the previous mentioned, I have seldom seen on the Western Continent, the reasons I attribute this to being that salt and not fresh water are its favourite haunts.

Although the wings of all these birds are extremely small in proportion to their size of body, they are capable of swift and protracted flight when they gain elevation, but their efforts to do so are awkward in the extreme. Strictly migratory, however, they never come in winter a great distance south of the ice line, and seldom at any season are to be found in numbers far from it. A few couple annually nest about the lakes in the north of the United States, but their great breeding haunts are on the edge of the Arctic circle. Although nearly all American web-footed birds that frequent fresh water are excellent food, these divers are not much "to crack up" on that score, for they ever possess a strong fishy flavour, far from agreeable to the majority of human palates; but beggars not being choosers I shall

accommodate myself to circumstance, so sup on my handsome prize, and be sufficiently grateful to thank the gods afterwards for what they have sent me.

Leaving the level of the lake by a gradual ascent of quite one hundred feet, I gained the long-desired termination of the promontory. It was a noble bold headland, with almost a perpendicular front, covered with immense boulders, and a few dwarfed birch-trees. From it projecting much further into the lake than any of the neighbouring points of land, and being far more marked in its outline, I felt little doubt that it was a recognised landmark of the Indians, and as such often approached, so that my chance of being rescued by a passing canoe looked far from improbable, thus for a hard day's travel, performed under very trying circumstances, being in a very unfit state to undergo severe fatigue, I felt deserving the reward I received for my exertions.

For a signal I was resolved to keep a large fire burning near the extremity of the point, so my labours for the day had not terminated, as fuel had to be gathered. If I had possessed an axe this would not have been either a long or very tedious job; but such not being the case, I had to satisfy myself with such dead limbs as I found strewn upon the ground, or green boughs of such dimensions as could be lopped off with the aid

of my hunting-knife. Thus it was late ere I turned in, when I was too worn out to be able to sleep. Moreover, an hour or two after dark it became exceedingly cold, which I felt the more from having selected a place entirely destitute of shelter. Further, I am not certain that it would have been a very safe performance to have permitted myself to doze, for the three wolves gave me indisputable evidence that they were still in attendance; if to-morrow they have not taken themselves off, I shall be compelled to take aggressive steps against them.

At length a faint line of light in the eastern skies denoted the approach of day and the termination of one of the most wearying and uncomfortable nights I could even desire my direst enemy to have to pass. With dawn the wind died out, and the surface of the lake, no longer fretted with its pressure, lay still, calm, and clear as molten lead, while the distant shores and numerous islands looked suspended in space. Although far from in a frame of mind to be pleased or imaginative, I could not resist gazing with admiration on the fair landscape, and thinking what future is in store for it, and what do you suppose my imagination can paint? A land teeming with a prosperous, consequently happy population, an integral part of the most powerful nation of the earth.

Although searching the water in every direction for over an hour, not a vestige of animal life could be seen save the loons asleep upon its placid bosom. I had hoped, I had even dared to expect that a canoe would be in sight, or a white wreath of smoke indicating an encampment; but, alas! I was doomed to disappointment, and might as well have been in an uninhabited planet as far as evidences of human life could be discerned. Possibly, physically I am not much weakened by this protracted detention, but my body feels cramped and stiffened, while my feet are in such a fearful state from bruises and chafing, that it is doubtful, even if it were necessary, that I could walk ten miles further; and worse than all, there was such an oppressive languor—an utter listlessness of purpose, accompanied by despondency, overwhelming me—that I even regarded death with feelings of indifference, so kept quoting, I fear almost in irony, “Oh, death, where is thy sting? oh, grave, where is thy victory?”

Leaving the margin of the water to gather fresh fuel for my fire, I spied the wolves on my return in its immediate vicinity, evidently looking up the *débris* of my last meal. My approach seemed to give them little uneasiness, true, they did not actually dispute possession; but they gave way with so bad a grace, that

it was only a question of time and a little longer acquaintance for them to do so, thus I determined to take the high hand, and make example of the most insolent. An opportunity soon occurred; the largest of the trio, a powerful, well-made and clothed fellow, turned round after retiring a few paces and looking me full in the face showed his teeth, after the manner of a sulky, cross-grained dog. I thereupon pitched my gun to my shoulder, and aiming for the centre of his chest pulled the trigger. Almost without a struggle the creature fell, his life-blood choking his last respirations. After all, my ammunition was not thrown away, for I utilised a portion of the hide to tie around my suffering feet, the remainder being intended to temporarily supply the place of a mattress. The Indians frequently eat wolf—to dog flesh they are absolutely partial—so I cut off a hind-quarter and hung it out of the way of thieves, only to be used when my pantry ceased to be better provided.

CHAPTER IX.

ABOUT mid-day, having failed to see a canoe, and retaining anything but an agreeable remembrance of last night's sleeping-place, I resolved to search for a more suitable one. As it was my intention to keep the fire burning on the point, it was not desirable to remove far ; moreover, as the neighbourhood was rocky and irregular there was little doubt that it would be easy finding what I wished in the vicinity.

In a ravine, the sides of which afforded shelter from the prevailing north wind, so consequently was well supplied with vegetation, and through whose bottom ran a beautiful clear rill, I discovered a cave. The entrance to it was almost large enough for me to pass through without stooping, and its floor was covered with beautiful white sand ; in fact, so regular was the formation and suitable the selection of the situation of this grotto, that it looked more like the

work of man than of nature. I cautiously peered in, but with my back against the light I could not distinguish its proportions. At first I hesitated to enter, but on after-thought felt rather ashamed at having even for an instant given way to what very much resembled fear, so pushed into the dark aperture. At first nothing could be done except grope my way, but after a time the eye became accustomed to the subdued light, and I was able to distinguish sufficiently far in advance of me to move forward with less caution. I must have been upwards of fifteen feet from the outer world, when this subterranean passage opened out into what appeared to me a vast chamber. Having visited the Mammoth Cave of Kentucky and other celebrated caverns, I was well aware of the danger an explorer runs of getting lost in such places, so I retraced my steps to procure some bark or other material, out of which to make a torch. Soon I sighted a patriarchal birch-tree, the lower portion of which I denuded of its hoary curling cover, and with it returned to complete my discoveries.

Gaining the point in the cave originally reached, there my load was deposited, and after several unsuccessful attempts ultimately succeeded in lighting, then to make burn up with powerful flame, the mate-

rial procured. Holding the torch aloft I had a clear survey of the interior; it was about twenty feet square, and but for the rugged walls and irregular roof might have been supposed a chamber in an ordinary dwelling. In one of the recesses, that next the entrance on the right-hand side, something caught my eye; at first it appeared to be part of a root, but on closer inspection, to my dismay, I may say horror, I discovered it to be the remains of what had once been a specimen of frail mortality. In a sitting position it reclined against the wall with the head shrunk forwards upon the knees and arms, and although only a portion of the clothing remained, the body appeared perfect. The skin had become of that nondescript brown colour, nearly resembling mahogany, and seemed to have shrunk to such an extent as to leave no room between it and the bones for flesh or muscle. Under no circumstances have I a liking for such sights, at the present time, with my body enervated and my mind depressed from my unfortunate position, I was doubly unable to endure it, still there came over me an inexplicable fascination that prevented my at once leaving the revolting spectacle.

From the uncovered head hung down a quantity of coarse long black hair, a rude stone pipe minus a

stem lay on one side, while an antiquated flint musket, with the stock so decayed as to look as if it would almost fall from the metal when touched, leaning against the wall, muzzle upwards, rested within reach of the mummy-like fingers. In a few minutes all this was comprehended. I do not think even then I should have left, had not the spluttering of my torch, and the rapid decline in the light it afforded, admonished me that if I did not collect my scattered senses and pull myself together, I should soon be entombed in darkness with the dead.

Ill as I had felt previous to this, doubly I felt so now, and could not help regarding the discovery as a device of the Evil One to show me what was to be my fate. At first, when I felt the fresh air fan my cheek on regaining the outer world, my inclination was to fly from the locality, as inhabitants do from a plague-struck city, but after-thought prevented my doing so; and the further I delayed the greater became my determination to look again upon the ghastly apparition, to learn whether violence, starvation, or natural causes had terminated life, and also obtain some relic that might trace to whom the unknown belonged; for although convinced by the hair, pipe, and gun that it was an Indian, yet I was

equally satisfied that alone, without a companion's sympathy or friend's attention, the soul had departed for the spirit land; for if it had been otherwise the body would not thus have been left, but deposited deep in the soil at the foot of a tree or overhanging rock after the manner of his race.

As an abundance of birch-bark was required to carry out my purpose, and there was none left in the immediate vicinity, I determined to postpone my search till the succeeding day, more particularly as I had still to find a suitable place to pass the night. Further examination of the ravine soon enabled me to discover another cave, in fact, the neighbourhood seemed to be perfectly excavated with these underground galleries. The one I selected was rather too open in front, still the entrance was well sheltered, the recess dividing off into two distinct passages twenty feet from its mouth. Here, with a fire at the entrance, I could not suffer much from cold, and be tolerably secure from marauders, while the loose dry sand would afford me a comparatively soft couch. Having collected a sufficiency of fuel I returned to my last sleeping-place to have my evening meal and a look out seawards. As I approached it, just as I expected, the remaining wolves were busy upon their late companion; already the carcass was torn in

pieces, and fragments of entrail and bone strewn around; the lesson I had taught them had its effect, for both gave me a wide berth, not very hurriedly it is true, for each carried with him a piece of carrion, but sufficiently so to announce that my proximity was considered dangerous. Without molestation or any attempt to increase their fears, for now they treated me with sufficient respect as justified my believing they would not presume to become too familiar, I did not wish to drive them from the neighbourhood, as in case of necessity I would be able to convert them into food.

Making a distinction, as man ever does, between reason and sagacity, placing the former far in precedence of the latter, with what ease could either of these animals find any place they desired, travelling towards it with equal correctness by day or night; while I, when without the sun for a guide, am unable to pursue a straight line. Yes, man may make what distinctions he likes, but he is ever too prone to elevate his own race to the detriment of the others. Human beings build their dwellings to suit their requirements, but the birds of the air do likewise; we garner our grain that food may not be wanting, when the earth refuses to supply it; the squirrel, the marmot, and many others do likewise. Birds migrate over

thousands of miles of land and water, yet periodically and with unerring instinct return to the same spot for many successive seasons ; while the lords of creation, although truly they find their ways about the earth, cannot lose sight of land, or trust themselves to the pathless forest or desert without calling to their aid the use of the compass. As in individuals of the human race, no two are alike, each having a specialty in his character, so among the quadrupeds and birds, all are gifted with qualities positively necessary to their existence, nevertheless these peculiarities are totally distinct in each race.

Gaining the extremity of the point, gazing with an intentness over a prairie of water that caused my sight to pain me, still not a vestige of what indicated the vicinity of human life was to be seen. As the atmosphere was clear and still, what an area could I cover, still not a canoe, not a wreath of smoke was in sight. I might have taken unction to my soul by considering myself lord of all I surveyed, but never did I feel more thoroughly that I would sooner be the humblest of a community than a king without subjects, let my demesne be as long and wide as the greatest empire of the earth :

There is a pleasure in the pathless woods ;
There is a rapture by the lonely shore ;

There is society where none intrude
By the deep sea, and music in its roar.

Very true, I agree with the poet, but these pleasures are enjoyed by contrast. I had now obtained so much of it that I longed most earnestly for a slight experience of the reverse side.

While watching, longing, waiting, a familiar little note struck upon my ear. At first I thought it fancy, but when it was again and again repeated, I turned round to see its producer. Yes, my ear had told me correctly, for after a critical examination I discovered the unexpected little beauty. If I had been in the pine-woods, its presence would not have surprised me; but here, some miles from them, I was scarcely prepared to find it. For many reasons it deserves notice, firstly, from its scarcity in England, secondly from the startling dissimilarities its plumage appears to undergo, and thirdly, the tremendous power given to its peculiar shaped bill, enabling it to sever with ease the hardest pine cones to extract the seeds. Many naturalists advance as the reason that it is not more frequently seen in the British Islands is, because it breeds in winter and migrates north with the approach of mild weather. In such latitudes as my present situation I do not consider that it can be deemed migratory, although it certainly

appears far less abundant in moderate than severe weather. This I account for by its being extremely shy at one season and quite the reverse at the other. In spring I have frequently found its nest composed of the most diminutive twigs and grass, bound together with wool and hair, and beautifully lined with the latter. Its eggs also possess the peculiarity of varying almost as much in colour as the parents do in plumage. A typical one, however, may be described as about the size of that of the bullfinch, but rather more elongated, of a cream colour and white ground varying in places to a warmer tinting, while the larger end is numerously spotted with red, occasionally intermixed with darker colours. They are capable of sustaining a great amount of cold, appear to enjoy themselves very much in the snow; but when the earth is clothed in this garment, they are ever found associated in large flocks, the vicinity of a homestead or the margin of a clearing being then their favourite resort. My little visitor's tameness was not as acceptable as it would have been under other circumstances, for it predicted the approach of cold weather, a prophecy I did not want, as I was well aware it could not be far distant, and disliked being reminded that such was the case. As children sing to the lady-bird "fly away home," I might have

done likewise, but fear the advice was equally improbable to be taken. However, when the sun dipped and glomon usurped the place of its light, the familiar twitter ceased and I was again alone. The night became very dark and the winds breathless, so I did not suffer from cold, this inducing me to remain by my signal fire till a late hour. All this time I never shut my eyes, all desire to sleep seemed to have departed; but memory was hard at work, recalling many scenes and days of youth long buried in the past. Travelling through the entire retina of boyhood; one moment I was bird-nesting in the woods that margin Clyde, another climbing the ruins of ivy-clad Bothwell Castle, or again fishing for trout or parr along the rugged margin of the Avon, or watching the crows circling aloft over the rugged heights of Cadzow. Again the scene would shift to the banks of the noble Tay, Scone Palace, the South Inch, the Almond, with the birchen slopes, and rich meadows that surround it, for oft they had echoed my school-boy chatter of a Saturday afternoon, at a period when manhood and foreign lands were looked forward to with the thought that they were the realisation of the charming nursery pictures of fairy land; but how different it has been found, I leave all to answer, for whether born in a hovel or in a palace,

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with boundless wealth or sunk in poverty, sorrows and disappointments chequer the existence of all. Yes, such were my thoughts when a distant light, first faint, then gradually increasing, seemed to rise out of the distant waters. No *ignis fatuus*, no hallucination of brain, I felt convinced it was, and the further to confirm my belief others sprung up around the first seen; but, alas! they were miles away, and without a doubt were produced by Indians spearing fish, so how could I attract their attention. First I thought of my gun; the intermediate space was great, would the sound travel so far or the flash be seen so far away, and was it prudent to spend my trifling stock of ammunition when its value was more to me than gold or precious stones? No, the best plan was to keep the fire amply supplied, and make a blaze that would gleam over the waters for miles. My discovery had renewed hope, and with its return came strength and energy; bruises and ailments were forgotten, and I piled on the brush I had collected till the hungry flames reached aloft, but without more food they would die, so little caring for wolf or bear recklessly I rushed into the darkness, and by dint of tearing, breaking, and pulling returned with an ample load. How provokingly quick such small wood would burn, I learned this night, for no sooner

was one load brought in than another was required. Scarcely could I even steal a few minutes to watch the result, and learn if any of the unknown turned towards me; but after all there was nought to be gained by doing so, for the moment they gave up fishing to respond to me their torch would have been extinguished, and I should be in ignorance of their approach till their craft came within the glare of my fire.

My incessant labours caused night to flit by rapidly, and day at length broke; clearer and clearer it became, till the sun burst forth; and could I believe my eyes? could not, I might almost say, for I was alone, and not a sign of human life in view.

"Hope deferred maketh the heart sick." For a few minutes I felt so; but the knowledge, the certainty that fellow-creatures were not far distant gave me fresh courage, and with it came the determination and power to have such a supply of fuel as would produce a blaze the coming night that would set the whole country-side in a low.

Being further determined to spare no efforts to attract the attention of any eye that might be turned this way, I went to the ravine, and cut a pole about twenty feet long; its diameter at the butt, although not more than six inches, gave me quite an hour's

hard hacking before it was severed. To the top of this I fastened my ground-sheet, and then erected my flag-staff, a beacon that doubtless could have been seen, from its elevated position, for many a mile.

All this labour over, I felt I had earned rest, and, giving way, thoroughly enjoyed it. Feeling convinced that my deliverance was near, I resolved to have another interview with the tenant of the cave, a final look at what circumstances will reduce man, the proud lord of the creation, to. Well provided with birch-bark, I entered. I thought I perceived a dank and unhealthy smell. Previously I had not observed it. The knowledge that it was a charnel-house possibly might have caused me to imagine such. But curiosity induced me to go on with a labour which certainly was not one of love. When the bark had sufficiently burnt up, I commenced my examination. Fragments of an old blanket-coat partially draped the figure. Without disturbing the position, I removed the covering from the chest, knowing that the aborigines invariably wear some ornament around the neck. Nor was I mistaken, for a small glittering piece of metal fell to the ground.

On examination, in the uncertain light of the

flickering blaze, I could discover no impression on its surface, for it was worn smooth as a coin that had long been in circulation. Feeling no compunction, I appropriated it. Among the sand, and close by the body, I exhumed an iron box, a well-worn rusty knife, also a powder-horn; these I took; but the gun, useless from its deep incrustation of rust, I left, for it was valueless to me, and a most fitting emblem to indicate the life the departed had led. But when will human eyes behold it? Long, very long, probably, is that time distant; and then it will possibly be those of an exploring white man, and not those of the deceased's own race, after the precursors of colonisation arrive here to set up their household gods.

To find myself in the broad stare of daylight again was a relief; but curiosity to examine my relics did not long brook delay. The powder-horn was not empty, but the quality was of the poorest description; the knife was such as is usually employed in the Indian trade, but without a mark to indicate where manufactured; while the little box was of that pattern which is usually employed by sailors—such a one possibly as Molly gave her lover Tom in the dear old charming song of “Wapping Old Stairs.” With a great effort I opened it—for that corroding fiend rust

had on it placed his stamp—when two flints, a steel pricker, and a piece of plug tobacco fell out. Small, truly, was the stock of this poor fellow's gear. Fancy spending life, possibly a long one, and sighing it out at last with no more worldly possessions! That he had met the white man was evident, and visited their trading posts yearly, or how could he be possessed even of these? Poor fellow! was he missed when first his absence was perceived, or was he, like thousands of others, regarded but as a machine, in whom no interest is taken when they cease to bring the supply that increases the trader's wealth? Truly, the poor Indians' is a sad fate, driven, year from year, further from the homes of their fathers, the wild game and fish—their staff of life—annihilated, and all this sacrifice expected to be submitted to without murmur or attempt to gain redress. But the medal I had forgotten. Close examination revealed it to be one of those given by the Catholic missionaries to their proselytes. What a burlesque must this poor descendant of the owners of the grand American demesne have thought the creed that taught him love, goodwill, and fellowship with those who, year by year, were despoiling him and his of their just inheritance! But the Indian problem is a painful mystery, which far wiser heads than mine have tried

in vain to satisfactorily solve. Certain it is that the two races, the European and original American, cannot thrive together, the prosperity of one being annihilation to the other. Thus the weaker must give place to the stronger; as becometh the faith you profess let their downfall be made easy; be gentle, be merciful, for they have suffered much.

CHAPTER X.

FEELING tired, and much disposed for an hour or two's sleep, I directed my steps to the other cave for the purpose of having a nap; for I had resolved to pass the coming night watching, as I had far more hope of my signal fire attracting attention than the flag that fluttered from the pole. Having stretched myself in the most luxurious position, do what I would I could not drive out of my mind a longing to make use of the piece of tobacco I had so lately obtained. Although I wished to argue with myself that such was not the case, yet there is no doubt that I hankered after a pipe from the dead man's stock. Still there was something repulsive in the deed, and qualms of conscience arose on the propriety of doing so. But after all, it was as bad to appropriate it as to use it; the dead no longer required it, and I did—the necessities of the living had a right to take pre-

cedence. Never was a piece of plug tobacco harder to get a knife through, and when I succeeded the portion detached crumbled into dust; but all these minute particles were carefully preserved till sufficient were obtained to afford a smoke; not a bouncing big pipeful, as I could have desired, but sufficient to fill the top of the bowl, the bottom being first provided with a good foundation of birch twigs chopped fine. After a long sea voyage, or a sojourn in distant lands, on arriving on English soil, the first thing I invariably do is to call for a pint pewter of bitter beer, and the intense satisfaction from those draughts is long remembered; but the pleasure from this smoke afforded me satisfaction never to be forgotten. The familiar flavour, the circling white wreath that rose round my head, even the sight of the wooden bowl projecting beyond my nose, recalled happy memories, and softened down the loneliness of my position. To say that I felt reconciled would be wrong, but that I looked upon my situation in a much more hopeful light is the truth; and that grateful lethargy to the wearied that precedes sleep came, and I glided into the realms of unexplored dreamland. How long I had been oblivious to the affairs of this world I know not, when I was awakened by something rushing past me. In an instant I sprang to my feet; to

obtain a knowledge of the cause was but the work of a moment. The danger of my position, with equal rapidity, struck me, and to avoid it, felt that nought could be done to save myself, but struggle as man only can when life or death is to be the result. A she bear and her cub had made this cave their home. When I had appropriated it both had been out on a foray. The hurried entrance of the youngster had caused him to pass me before aware of my presence. So now I stood between a half-grown bear, whose outline I could just trace in the uncertain light, and the mature animal desirous of joining her progeny. That the young one would not muster courage to come back past me, I felt convinced; that the old one would attack me for intervening between them, I felt certain. There was only one enemy to dread; but in the contracted limit of the cave, where light was uncertain, and the foe of enormous power, there was much in such a conflict to fear. My gun, never now separated from me, was in my hand; each barrel held the life of a foe quite as formidable if properly directed; but then came the point, if my hand or eye failed, my knife alone could save me; but what were the odds against having an opportunity or power to bring it satisfactorily into use?

Remaining with the butt of my gun at my hip, I

felt for the familiar handle of my bowie. I partially drew it to see that it was loose in the sheath, then dropped it back into its place ; shorter far than it takes to tell was this performed, but not quicker than was necessary, for a whine of the young bear dissipated in a moment the parent's doubt, and in an instant she rushed upon me. In quick succession both barrels were discharged, the second appeared to check the advance of my foe, but before I could draw my knife —enveloped in smoke and sand—I was seized by the left shoulder and hurled down backwards, my head coming with fearful violence in collision with the rocks. At other times such a blow would have stunned me—thank goodness on this occasion it did not, or my earthly career must there and then have terminated. No, not for an instant did I lose my presence of mind. My right arm instinctively I forced across my chest, and the welcome handle was in my hand ; rapidly I disengaged it, and struck with all my force ; in contact with the shoulder blade it must have come, for it did not enter and was nearly knocked from my grasp. Feeling no pain, only as if held in a vice, I struggled to gain a better position ; but down on my face came one of the wretch's paws as if to crush my head into the ground, but it had not the effect, for the moment I felt its

pressure I seized the upper toe in my teeth with a grip that must have surprised Bruin, for immediately she made an effort to disengage it, giving me a chance, and into the chest just over the breast-bone again, again, again I buried my long blade; the hold on my shoulder loosens, again and again I ply the knife—there is a rattle, a gurgle in the fiend's throat, then a choking sob, followed by a stifled cough, and my face and neck are deluged with warm liquid blood. To gain the open air was my first thought; in an instant I had done so, and thankful I felt, for I had escaped from one of the most imminent dangers of my life, and doubly grateful I had reason to be when I found that I had not been maimed or seriously injured. That day I had seen quite enough of caves; nothing but extremely bad weather, I was resolved, would cause me again having anything to do with them, so with hurried step I hastened off to my signal station. Turning the corner where I had shot the wolf, to my surprise and delight I saw three Indians examining the fire and flag pole. So intent were they that my approach was unobserved; at length one turned his eye so as to catch mine, and with a yell he wheeled round, and followed by the others fled down the side of the bluff. Not to be deserted, I gave chase, thus sliding, slipping, jumping, falling, soon reached the bottom, where a

canoe was stranded. For their craft they at once made. Let them gain it they will be off I know, so I redoubled my exertions to overtake them. Some supernatural power was that day given me; never before or since have I exhibited such agility, for I overtook the Red-skins ere they embarked; but this mattered not, they would have nought of me, not even remain to listen to what I said, but dropped their vessel, which they had already laid hold of, and fled in different directions, leaving me its possessor.

What could all this mean? Doubtless that they had become seized with some unaccountable attack of fear. However, I had got their craft, and stick to it I was determined, for with its assistance I could find my way to where I had observed the lights of the natives who were spearing on the previous night. I was too much out of breath to shout after the retreating figures, so I stood panting and blowing like a broken-winded horse after severe exercise. Strange to say, the retreating figures never turned round to look; had they done so they must have seen that I was a human being, and more extraordinary still was their conduct, when I state that their guns, blankets, ammunition, &c., were all in the canoe, things that the aborigines value above everything earthly.

My fatigue and severe exertions had caused me to become very heated, a drink of water I was almost dying for, so stooped down to ladle some up with my hands, when, for the first time, I observed they were one mass of gore, my face I knew could be little better. This then must be the cause of their precipitous flight. They took me for some fiend in human shape, and preferred losing all to coming in contact with me. The Indians are marvellously superstitious, and if these men do not return and thus learn the groundlessness of their fears, till their dying day they will vow and affirm that they have seen the devil.

However, I have got their canoe, and intend, whether they return or not, that it shall be the means of my escape. Of course, if they will come and fraternise with me so much the better; but if they do not, then, although I have qualms that it is not quite the correct thing to do, I will start alone. If it were possible for white men to act in such a manner, I doubt if anything would induce me to desert them, for the probability is they would starve, or wander about, lost, in this vast country of forest and lake. Not so, however, with the aborigines, a day or two at most will take them to acquaintances, and although not possessed of firearms, by means of

pitfalls and snares they can obtain sufficient subsistence till they do so.

I should very much liked to have gone to the top of the bluff for my ground-rug, but desert the canoe, even for a moment, was not to be thought of; and as the canoe cannot be carried with me, the loss must be put up with, although a most serious one. Leaning over the gunwale inspecting the craft's various contents, I heard a step on the shingle. Looking up I perceived an Indian; he advanced slowly and dubiously towards me, then stopped. I addressed him. My voice seemed to reassure him, for he came on more hurriedly, again halted; for some moments we gazed fixedly at each other, and in that look I recognised a face I had seen before, his change of expression plainly denoting that the recognition was mutual. This Red-man was a frequent visitor at the old chief's camp, and spoke sufficient English to understand me. I explained what had occurred, when the habitual gravity of his race gave way, and he actually laughed; but he was prompt in action also, and set off without delay to overtake the fugitives. About dusk he returned with two.

All their fears had evaporated, still they looked ludicrously humbled at the contemptible figure they had cut, and so absurd did the whole thing appear to

me that again and again a tendency to give way to my mirth occurred. One thing, my following up these frightened creatures at the pace I did, was most fortunate, for if they had succeeded in escaping in their canoe, I feel convinced nothing would have induced them to return. Now that matters were so satisfactorily arranged our departure was postponed 'till dark, so all adjourned to the head-land to cook and enjoy a good meal. The pleasure I enjoyed at being again among human beings, and listening to the human voice, is more easily imagined than expressed; in fact, so much was I absorbed in contemplating the fortunate circumstances that had led to my release that for the time being I had forgotten the stirring and exciting events of the morning; but they were recalled by one of the Indians pointing to a rent in my apparel over the shoulder from whence protruded a piece of shirt saturated with blood. Then I narrated what had occurred, how I had been cornered in the den, how the struggle had been fought, and the result, those who understood what I said explaining in their dialect to the others. I regret to say incredulity was marked on all their faces, which became the more significant with my desire to dissipate it. The Red-man is too polite to tell a person that

he lies, but it is not always necessary to use such language to inform a person that you think he does. Thus springing to my feet, I offered to show them the scene. Even this was not sufficient, for they remained recumbent around the fire, chattering in their own lingo like a lot of monkeys; however, when I reverted to the meat and the excellent addition it would make to our meal, I commenced to gain ground, but the moment I mentioned the cub, and that I had not molested it, all sprung to their legs like one man, and would brook not a moment's further delay. The love of torturing the inferior animals is one of the worst traits in the Red-man's character. Thus I knew that the poor young bear, if made a prisoner, would have to endure every sort of barbarism that human ingenuity could invent before released by death. So I made up my mind, without saying anything on the subject, to give it a bullet on the first opportunity.

The cave was soon reached; there laid the mother stark and stiff as I had left her, while the child, apparently unconscious of the cause, was stretched at length by the parent's side. Alarmed at our presence the little one fled into the further recesses of the interior, and I trusted had effected its escape. But such was not the case, for when the carcass was

drawn out, the better to afford facilities for skinning and cutting up, affection for the parent returned with redoubled force to the child, inducing him to come forth and scan our operations.

One of the Indians ceased work, and glided among the rocks; his object I knew was to avail himself of the first opportunity offering to get between the cub and his retreat. So I delayed no longer, but fired, killing the luckless creature dead.

I could see my conduct did not give satisfaction, but when I pleaded ignorance of their ways, and no desire to participate in the spoils, harmony and good-fellowship were re-established.

The quantity of bear meat my new friends consumed at that meal, I would be afraid to say, for it really appeared impossible. However, it produced no other effect than loosening their tongues, and making them become most communicative. I have frequently noted this among savages, viz., that an excess of fresh meat produces a result almost the same as partial intoxication. Such an opportunity was not to be lost for obtaining further information on the cause of their stampede, for hitherto they had been rather reticent on the subject. Although impossible to repeat the narrative in language used, I will endeavour to give it as closely as possible.

"When fishing last night they had seen the light burning on the point, but thought it was caused by the bad Manitou who wished to tell them that he was angry with his servants for not having brought him an offering of fish before the winter set in." Now this point had the reputation of being haunted, so never was visited except on such occasions as it was deemed necessary to pacify its evil guardian, and thus prevent him making their hunts and fishing unsuccessful, or throwing trees upon them in the forest, or enveloping them in storms when they are crossing the lake. Night not being deemed a suitable time to stop at the dreaded place, they resolved next afternoon, on their way back to the fishing-ground, to drop upon the margin of the bluff their propitiatory offering. On arrival, to their surprise they saw the pole and flag; this looked a little too much like man's work, thus causing them to land and examine. So three came up to the flag-staff, while the other who was to have remained with the canoe, was attracted by the appearance of a martin which he had followed into the brush.

There is a tradition among the Indians that whoever sees the Manitou immediately afterwards dies; so when I was discovered the unfortunate who first sighted me called out what he supposed he had ob-

served, and his companions, not being desirous of having an immediate termination placed upon their existence, followed the example set them. Nothing, therefore, would have induced them to turn to look back ; the strange voice, and a knowledge that they were being pursued, was sufficient to make them resign all they possessed rather than return to where the Evil One had taken up his abode. The one who had given the false alarm explained how I was covered with blood, and how fearful I looked ; so, although chaffed by his comrades, still all appeared to think they would have done likewise. I carefully refrained from saying anything about the dead Indian, and having helped myself to his effects—for, knowing their superstitious nature, and the awe with which they regard the dead, I had little doubt that they would have deserted me, or found some pretext for refusing me a passage in the canoe.

It was dark when we embarked ; the water was without a ripple, and fortunately it was so calm, for, what with bear's-meat and myself being added to the load, the canoe was sunk so deep that the slightest sea must have proved dangerous. The heavy meal had not affected the crew, not even made them indolent, so the paddles were plied with such power and skill that we reached the fishing-

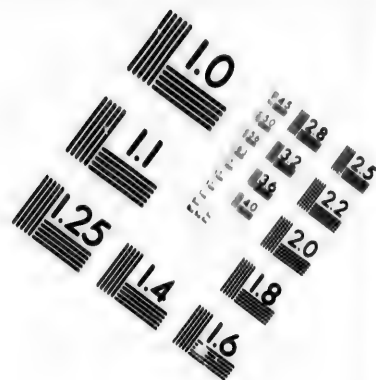
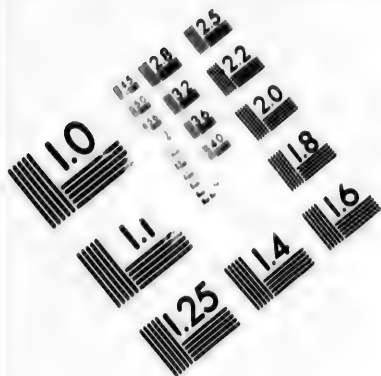
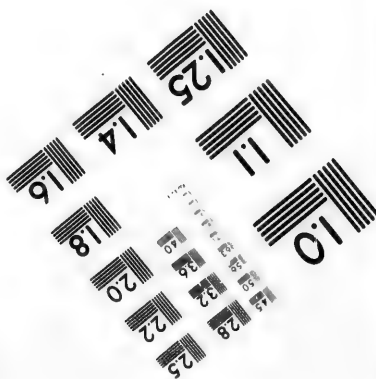
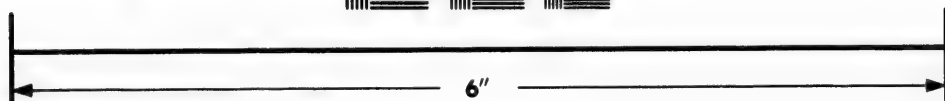
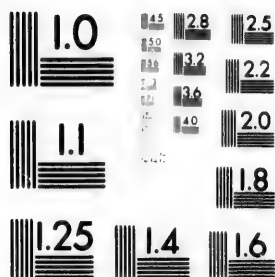


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bank in about an hour, where already were assembled seven other crafts. Here two of the party left us, and got into other canoes, taking with them their respective shares of bear-meat; and I induced the others, much against their will, and not without promising a very large present, to give up their fishing for that night, and proceed at once to the old chief's camp. It is not surprising that so much coaxing was requisite to induce them to accede to my request when it is known that this fishing season lasts but a week or two, and on it they are dependent for a large portion of their winter supplies; further, although spearing is accomplished when a ripple is on the water, a calm night like the present was certain to reward their exertions with a very heavy capture. All the natives fishing here had heard of me; only two or three had seen me before, but the warm and affectionate manner with which I was welcomed told that I was regarded with the most kindly feelings.

CHAPTER XI.

THE excitement of the day, the constant change, thankfulness for my delivery, had, all combined, caused me to forget myself ; but as I settled down in the bottom of the canoe, with the hope of sleeping throughout the journey, severe pains in my head and shoulder reminded me that I was, properly speaking, on the sick list ; and, worse than all, my wounds were so situated that I had the greatest difficulty in dressing them. However, one of the Indians volunteered his assistance, and a careful, tender nurse he proved. For wounds and abrasions there is nothing like cold water. Of this there was no scarcity ; so, with a piece of wet blanket, thoroughly washed clean, on each of the ailing parts, I found such relief that, what between the charming cradle-like motion of the canoe and my exhaustion, I was soon sound asleep, only waking when we had reached our destination, a

little after daybreak. How welcome was the sight of the familiar wigwams, the pine-clad hills, the open ground, and hill-side that overlooked the camp, can only be known by those who have been placed in situations similar to that I had escaped from. For my rescue I felt intensely grateful, and did not forget, or feel too ashamed by the presence of others, to offer up thanks and praises to whom it was due. The first to meet me was the poor, blear-eyed old hound; the arrival of strangers brought him to the beach. After an inspection of us, I was recognised, when the old creature gave me a long, deep-noted welcome, that awakened in my memory a thousand thoughts of my far-distant island home. Once more I felt one of the world, that I still had a part to play in it, and that my future life was not always to be clouded with storm and shadow. But by this time every hut had given forth its inhabitants. True, they were nearly all females, for the men were away hunting or fishing, who gave me a welcome one receives who is supposed to have returned from the spirit world. The poor old squaw, the wife of the chief—she who had such serious matrimonial intentions regarding me—and her daughter Saucy, cried with pleasure as they again and again embraced me or kissed my hands, and, when they discovered that I was wounded,

expressed the greatest solicitude and gave every attention to my ailments. The first thing an Indian thinks of as necessary to properly welcome a stranger is to place before him food. The whole population vied with each other in this respect, and if I had possessed the digestive powers of a dozen, instead of one person, there would still have been an abundance, and to spare.

As I had not here the means of paying the two good fellows who had brought me thus far, who, now they had performed their mission, were most anxious to return to their fishing, at once, without a moment's hesitation took my promise, that as soon as they had time to spare to visit me at the shanty, I would scrupulously liquidate their claims. By noon their canoe was but a rapidly-diminishing speck on the bosom of the lake. May their labours never go unrewarded, and the grim spectre starvation never enter their wigwams; may their hunting-grounds long be unobtruded upon by the squatter, and may they never imbibe a taste for the greatest enemy of their race, the soul-debasing and body-destroying fire - water. The existence of people upon this part of the American continent is, I fear, short; may that fell time not come in your days, for truly, it would be a sad and unjust reward to be driven

from the land of your fathers by the very race of whom you have just saved one of its members from death.

That all is not right at the shanty I am convinced, for there is a cloud of mystery, and a desire not to allude to it evinced, but this I trust soon to unravel, for after another day of rest I shall go there.

On a point covered with exceedingly lofty timber, not over a quarter of a mile from the encampment, is a rookery, if such a term may be used, of ospreys, a bird now seldom seen in the British Islands, but exceedingly abundant on this continent.

I induced one of the youngsters to accompany me on a visit of inspection to the place. Of course, at this season, eggs could not be expected, but the examination of a nest would be an ample reward for the trouble. The size of many of them was so great that they must have been the result of the accumulation of material for many succeeding years, thus assisting to confirm the belief that these handsome, noble birds invariably return to the same breeding ground if not driven off by intruders. This would not be so remarkable in Great Britain; but here, where by compulsion the osprey has to be migratory, and spend its winters thousands of miles to the south

of where it hatches, this circumstance is well deserving of note.

Young Red-skin, after a little coaxing, ascended to to the largest nest, and after exerting no small amount of skill and strength, succeeded in dislodging it. In its previously elevated position it appeared large, still I was not prepared to find it of such immense size. Without exaggeration the *débris* would have filled a couple of garden wheelbarrows; while some of the sticks were so large that it appeared impossible for the bird to have carried them up to the nesting place. The centre, however, was composed of very different material, the finest and smallest limbs of the birch being most skilfully wound together, the whole forming a cup about the size of the top of a man's head, lined most perfectly with hair and moss woven together. Although there were three of these powerful birds perched on neighbouring trees, they did not molest the boy, which they doubtless would have done had there been eggs or young. The hair at first surprised me, for no domestic animals exist within many hundred miles of here; but on examination it proved to be that of the moose, that is so bountifully supplied in winter costume to its withers and neck. It is very much, indeed, to be regretted that so many of the indigenous birds of

Britain are year by year getting scarcer, especially this one, for it is the least destructive to game of all the birds of prey. True, they will take any fish that comes sufficiently close to the surface to be pounced on, but the majority of these captures are sick or maimed, the loss of which is not so much to be regretted. On a salmon ford they doubtless, if permitted, could do much harm; but then, if the fishery was valuable, they could be easily warned off. The eggs of the osprey, of which two are generally to be found in each nest, are about the size of those of ordinary domestic fowls, very round, cream coloured, blanchd with deep rufus spots, the markings being much darker and more numerous at the upper or larger end.

One foe this bird possesses, and one which evidently is much feared, viz., the bald-headed eagle, who, like a coward as he is, watches the hard-working osprey till he has secured his prey, when with rapid pinion he swoops upon him. Sometimes the struggle will be protracted for minutes, when the shrill cry of the osprey will be heard as if begging not to be deprived of his food, but all in vain, solicitation is thrown away upon the bullying coward, and fear for worse consequences induces the fish to be dropped, which is frequently seized by the free-

booter before it has reached the water. I know no more interesting sight than to watch one of these battles, and whenever I have witnessed them, the days of hawking were recalled, with babbling spaniels, neighing palfreys, gorgeously dressed attendants, gallant knights, and last, though far from least, lovely damsels. But from the days of chivalry and the age of romance, let us return to the wild, wild woods of a land whose discovery scarcely dates so far back. Having this Indian lad alone to myself, and thus no sage old heads to wag an admonition of silence to him, I availed myself of the opportunity to do a little of what is familiarly designated pumping. My kindness had gained the youth's confidence. If I had understood his language better I should have learned more; however, this I became certain of—Antoine had returned and was at the shanty. How about my property was the first thought, the second was a determination to regain it at any cost, and that I feared would not be small.

That evening I attempted to bargain for a canoe to take me round, but all efforts were futile, they were either away or unfit for the journey, or there were no men to paddle me. There was possibly a great amount of truth in this, but nevertheless I could imagine a desire to prevent my going,

but when I stated my determination to walk, the secret came out, that Antoine would be certain to kill me. The story of two Irish citizens of the great Republic discussing equality occurred to me. The one stated that "one man was as good as another," the other coincided, but added, "True for you, Pat, and sometimes a deal better." So I was determined to see if I were not the better one. As usual I was not permitted to start alone. The old lady found she had pressing business there, and, of course, her daughter must accompany her, then two other aged women suddenly discovered they must see their husbands who were with the old chief, for that veteran had been there for some days. It was a queer *cortége*, still I found them very useful, for the path was familiar to all, and I was released from the pressure of carrying my ground-sheet and other extras—no small consideration in my present weak state. When we had arrived within a mile or so of our destination, I took the van, at the same time not forgetting the precaution of seeing that my gun was in a fit state to do most effectual service, for I believe Master Antoine capable of perpetrating anything from pitch and toss to manslaughter, if it would serve his purpose. At length the clearing came in view, in a few minutes more we had entered it, where we were welcomed by the shrill

voice of half a dozen curs, foremost and most vociferous among whom was the faithless Poteen. Contrite, indeed, he should have been at my travel-soiled state, and humbled himself in the dust, or exhausted himself with fawning to make up for his villanous conduct; but no, he did not even give that trifling reparation, but even had the insolence to go further, turn a deaf ear to my voice, and treat me as an honest dog at home would the veriest tramp. No more faithful, true, and affectionate race of dogs exist than pure bred colleys; but a drop of bad blood had given this creature characteristics exactly the reverse from those possessed by his ancestry on the mother's side. But this Babel of yelps soon brought out nigh a dozen dusky children of the forest to learn the reason of the turmoil, foremost among whom was Cariboo. My companions he at once recognised; but it was not until he had cast his eyes a second or third time upon me, that fairly yelling out the old familiar appellation "Capen," he jumped towards me with the agility of a wild-cat, closed his arms about my waist, and, in his excitement, gun and all, lifted me off the ground.

His joy was carried to such an extent that it made him act like a child instead of a man, so I had to repress it to prevent his making himself ridiculous.

At length we reached the shanty. The old chief and Sugar were summoned; in a moment both came, and what between the veteran's welcomes and oft-repeated shakes of the hand, and the lad's joy, indicated by a diamond drop in the corner of each eye, I felt assured that I was no ordinary favourite with both. Housekeeping on Indian principles had not improved the appearance of my dwelling internally or externally, for all indicated confusion and neglect, still my property was safe, a matter of far greater importance, and a conclusive evidence to me that the Red-man, however much it is the custom to abuse him, is capable of honesty and sincerity when kindly treated. There was so much to hear and so much to tell, that I determined to postpone our conversation to another occasion on the plea of feeling fatigued. So the room was cleared of visitors, and orders given that no one on any account was to be admitted till I had rested.

I had scarcely laid down when an angry altercation ensued outside; there was no difficulty in recognising the voices of the speakers. The first was Antoine, insisting on being permitted to enter, the other was Cariboo, supported by the old chief, refusing to allow him. Although the applicant was positive, there was an earnestness in the denial of the other that told truly that my sentinels were determined to use

force if necessary to carry out my orders. This little episode assured me that whatever should occur, I had friends ready and willing to stand by me in any emergency that might occur.

Two hours' sleep, a thorough good wash and complete change of apparel, made me feel quite a new man. So I issued orders through my two aides-de-camp, that I would hold a grand pow-wow in the afternoon under the birch-tree, so long employed as a boat-house. Such occasions as these are great events with the Indians; they delight in forms and ceremony, for it gives them an excuse for exhibiting themselves *en grande tenue*. The aborigines around me are, to a certain extent as to their raiment, Europeanised, thus preventing the display of feathers and paint characteristic of the tribes whose home is on the great slopes that verge upon the Rocky Mountains, and from this reason their taste runs in beads and trinkets, handsome furs and cunningly wrought belts of intricate patterns formed of brilliantly stained quills of the porcupine; and very noble they frequently look, unless when a desire to become attractive induces the happy owner of a chimney-pot hat, or other equally out of place piece of European costume, to be worn by them, which gives an absurdness to the look of even the most

sedate, that is likely to convulse the beholder with immoderate laughter ; however, we had no such exhibition, so that I retained my gravity with a fittingness worthy of so great an occasion.

At the appointed hour I proceeded to the rendezvous, where all were assembled seated on the ground in two lines, the chief occupying the apex of the angle where its sides joined, a vacant place next him being left for me. As I took my place each bowed his head forward, and remained with it in that position for several seconds. Then ensued a silence of some minutes, when all appeared to be wrapped in thought and gazing into vacuity. This being over I arose, and in as few words and simple language as I could command, narrated the events that had occurred to me and what lead to them. When any part of my discourse struck them as exciting, each exclaimed "Ugh !" But when they heard that I had passed some time on the point, which all well knew and thoroughly believed haunted ground, a perfect shower of "ughs" greeted me. At length I sat down amid a profound silence which lasted many minutes. This being the Red-man's manner of indicating the seriousness with which they regard your communication, and that it is worthy of grave consideration.

At length the old chief arose, his erect figure, soldierly attitude, and keen determined eye, made him a study worthy of a sculptor. Throwing his brilliant blanket loose, and raising his hand as if to invoke power to express what he wished to say, figures of celebrities of ancient Rome, clothed in the honoured toga, were recalled to my mind. Like a true orator, without being guilty of untimely hurry, he spoke, and although occasionally I failed to catch the meaning of an expression, such force, such earnestness, such suitable gesticulation, and such impressiveness I have seldom listened to. The purport of his words was nearly as follows :

“So few good white men come among us, that when I heard of your arrival I was sad and my people grieved with me ; but when the Indians that brought you here told us how well you had behaved to them, we said all the pale-faces are not bad, for are they not of the same race as the missionaries, and possibly this stranger is like unto them ; and when I came and saw you, and found that you did not drive me off or spit upon me as if I were a dog, but answered my questions, and treated me with the respect a son would his old father, my heart warmed to you, and day by day and morn by morn we learned to love you more, for not only did you respect us but fed us.

When I heard you were gone, that since your departure day had passed into night and night into day, I sent the young men to search for you, and when they returned with the dog, all believed you dead ; for while there is life a dog will not leave his master, so we grieved for you as if we should see you no more. But you are again with us and we are happy, and when you go to your own people tell them that Indian not all bad unless when white man have made him so."

And the old chief sat down amid numerous grunts of approval from his followers.

While this grand pow-wow was taking place the weather had suddenly changed, and fitful gusts of wind moaned through the trees or swept in eddying currents along the river course, gradually increasing in frequency and force, till all indicated the rapid approach of a severe autumnal storm. At length large drops of rain commenced to descend, affording an excellent pretext for breaking up our meeting. I was too tired and my mind lately too much overworked to entertain guests, and my dusky friends seemed well aware of what importance rest was to me, so with consideration worthy of the most civilised, let me depart to enjoy my own society. True, Master Sugar, with cat-like stealth, would steal in and out of my abode in the performance of his duties ; but it was done so noiselessly as almost to be imperceptible, more

particularly as the howling of the blast, the muttering of the deep-voiced, awe-inspiring thunder, the rushing avalanche of descending water, and the creaking, rending, and tearing of trees formed a chaos of reverberations so terrible as drowned all minor sounds.

I have witnessed the elements lashed into fury by a cyclone in the Indian Ocean, I have been in the surging vortex of a typhoon in the Formosa channel, and for a day and night, on board a powerful steamship, unable to advance against the winds, but rather to retrograde, from the uncontrollable force of the gale, have pitched and tossed off Quileparte in the Chinese Sea; but they were as skirmishes of a rear-guard in comparison to a great battle, when compared with the present raging of the hurricane. At an unusual burst of the storm-wrath, my little attendant whispered in my ear, "The Great Manitou is angry with his children." "Amen" was my response.

Athough on the American Atlantic sea-board the gales that occur in the same latitude as my present residence are protracted, often lasting several days, seldom less than twenty-four hours, except the season be summer, this storm did not, but relapsed into a death-like stillness more suddenly than it had sprung up, and that before it was many hours old. It is difficult to account for this, but however in-

explicable the cause, it is fortunate that it is so ; for what would be the destruction to the vegetable world if such spasmodic bursts of wrath were protracted ? Are we again to recognise in it a wonderful interposition of Providence to prevent so gigantic a section of country becoming uninhabitable to the animal creation ?

I have often heard it stated, possibly the first person that advanced the subject did so in joke—but how frequently do words spoken in jest come to earnest ?—that the safest place a person can be in during a tornado is the cabin of a well-built steam-ship. This I verily believe to be a fact. Timid dames and sea-sick swains will scarcely coincide with me, for they see danger of the craft that bears them being thrown on her beam ends at every roll, of going head-foremost into the ocean depths at every pitch, or foundering under the pressure of every spray that breaks over her bows ; but persons who have not a prejudice against marine travel, if they will fairly consider the matter, or refer to statistics of loss of life by tempests on the ocean, on board our first-class lines of vessels, not of course among our miserable coasters, or, more unworthy lumber-ships in the Quebec trade, than which no greater coffins exist will discover that my supposition is not erroneous.

CHAPTER XII.

As I was smoking my after-supper pipe, and studying over plans for my departure for civilisation, a knock was heard at the shanty door; in answer to my permission to enter, the latch was raised, the rough-constructed hinges creaked, and in a moment after Antoine was before me. His manner and expression left no room for doubt that his intentions were peaceful, for he held forth his hand, and whining piteously, sued for forgiveness for past transgressions. I am not one to forget and forgive in an instant, but slow to be provoked and rather unrelenting in my wrath when feeling that I have been unjustly dealt with, so I expressed surprise at the line of conduct he had adopted, but my apparent determination to keep him at arm's length, only made him become more subservient and cringing.

After some minutes he asked when I intended

returning, which, when I answered, he reminded me of my agreement to take him back with me; further, that he would assuredly die, and if not a natural death, be killed by the natives if I deserted him, and if such took place after he had warned me, I should most assuredly be guilty of murder. Previous to this, for I had foreseen that such a turn might occur in the course of events, I had determined that nothing should induce me to permit him to accompany me, but my heart now relented, so I acceded. Knowing well I would not break my word, the interview soon after terminated, and I was again alone, but not long; for the Indian boy, who had seen Antoine arrive, dreading that his intentions towards me were not amicable, had at once gone for Cariboo, both of whom, doubtlessly, had played the part of eaves-droppers during the greater portion of our conversation. Affection for me and a desire to protect me was their sole motive, and by the motive not the act I judged them.

Since my return I had not exchanged a dozen words with Cariboo, so I invited him to his favourite seat, and soon learned much interesting matter that had occurred during my absence. To commence at the beginning, when my not returning at the specified time had excited his alarm, he had at once gone to

the lake to have a consultation with the chief on what steps should be taken.

The Indians, ever prompt to act, determined at once that the old man and one or two of his people should take possession of the shanty, so as to protect my effects; while Cariboo, the boy, and another of the tribe would ascend the river till they reached my first camping-place, and from there commence their search for me. This they did, but beyond finding a track on the sandy bank of a brook which I had forded, they were unable to make out my further trail. At length, disheartened and exhausted from their tedious labour, they were about to return to the shanty, for they were on the barren not many miles from it, when to their surprise they were joined by Poteen, weather-stained and gaunt, moreover, so frightened, that he would not leave them for a moment. This they considered a very bad omen; so after fruitlessly spending a few hours inspecting the vicinity, they returned, and just in time to frustrate Antoine, who had unexpectedly made his appearance, his first action being an attempt to appropriate my effects under the plea that he was my relative, and that although we had quarrelled, yet he was the proper person to take charge of them, and see that they were handed over to my heirs.

The specious and earnest pleading of the scoundrel, moreover his having with him several Indians, who had assisted him in bringing from the interior a large stock of furs, almost had induced the old chief to give way; but Cariboo's eloquence and earnestness turned the tide of popular opinion, when a war of words ensued, ultimately resulting in my supporter vowing he would shoot the first man that dared to touch the smallest trifle of my property. Soon after a disturbance took place between the French Canadian and his followers, for they had been promised payment for the sundry peltries placed in his hand, on arriving at my dwelling. Thus Master Antoine found himself between two stools, so considered it better to submit till time or opportunity were more in his favour. But he was not yet out of hot water, for one of the Red-men that accompanied him had deserted, supposedly with the intention of communicating to his people the result of their fall trade and the manner they had been swindled out of its proceeds.

I now regretted that I had granted permission to the blackguard to accompany me back, but having passed my word, there was no retracting; on this point however I was resolved, that if any complaints were brought to me, and substantiated, of his having dealt dishonestly with the aborigines, I would not only refuse to permit him to leave with me, but throw

every obstacle in my power to prevent the result of his dishonesty being brought out of the wilderness ; for it is villains such as this, through pilfering, cheating, and perjuring themselves, cause these simple-minded, honest-intentioned, chivalrous people to regard the white-faced intruder with eyes of suspicion—even with worse, hatred.

I do not deny that the whole white race, as a nation, use the poor Indian badly—drive them from the home of their progenitors to a country that knows them not, and possibly banishes them further when they have commenced to individualise themselves with their new residence ; but then it is done by fairer means, and for the benefit of society at large.

Too excited, too tired, and my body demoralised from bad treatment, I could not sleep, but tossed and fretted through the livelong night, building up plans for the future, or demolishing previously-constructed edifices. Excess in all things is to be reprobated ; in eating, drinking, or exercise, the human frame is like a piece of steel ; so much it will bear with impunity, but go beyond it and injury must accrue. But of all the fancies that passed through my brain, one that took firm hold, and would not be contradicted, was a resolve to turn my face homewards as soon as it was possible to arrange my affairs. What affairs had I to arrange ? I hear asked. Well,

part with everything that was not absolutely necessary to assist me in my journey, for here they were of value, in civilisation of comparatively none. So when breakfast was over I sent for the old chief, and communicated my intention. As I anticipated, his first endeavour was to persuade me to remain; but when he saw I was resolved in my purpose, he willingly promised to do all in his power to assist me. Although time was of the greatest importance, I determined nothing should be done too hurriedly, so named the date of commencing my homeward journey seven days hence, in the mean time requesting my old friend to send to his people, and all those Indians who resided within easy access, and notify them that I would trade away the surplus of my supplies for such furs as they were willing to dispose of on the day previous to my leaving.

If a white man had been situated in his place, he would not have performed my behest, for he would at once have perceived that competition would be the result, and thus the value raised of what was most valuable for him to possess; but well I knew no such selfish motives would actuate this worthy old chief, so rested satisfied that everything in his power would be done to serve my interest. Within an hour three young men were secretly dismissed upon this errand,

but, although the chief had been enjoined to keep silent to all others in the camp, I found that this was requiring more of him than was in his power to comply with. The fact was, that the old gentleman had no secrets from his better half, for he was hen-pecked as much as any civilised husband, and what he was disinclined to tell was extracted from him either by fair or foul means. This is not stated on surmise, but from actual observation, for on more than one occasion I have seen the partner of his joys and sorrows, if she deemed from her lord's manner that something was being withheld from her, wheedle and caress him into making her a confidante, but if this failed reproaches and indignant protestations would follow, accompanied by expressions of grief and anger, that invariably resulted in the squaw gaining her point. Women, although they be red or white, live in palaces or wigwams, wear paniers and chignons or dress in buckskin, are much alike if a point is to be gained, and their husband is the instrument to be employed to reach it.

Thus I was congratulating myself on the success of my interview with the chief, and thinking how perfectly I had succeeded in keeping my departure secret for at least some days to come—for no one was present at our interview—when the old lady and her

handsome daughter appeared at the threshold of my residence. Courtesy, of course, made me bid them welcome, and request their entrance into the room. One look told all, but for fear that I might be in error, which I felt convinced I was not, in the most careless and nonchalant manner commenced talking on every subject that formerly had been of interest in the broken dialect most comprehensible to them. But both mother and child had a settled, moody, disappointed look, that all my compliments and determined agreeableness of manner would not banish; so if an answer was vouchsafed me, and that was only on occasions that it would have been downright rude to refuse—a monosyllable was the response. Both were evidently got up, regardless of expense, for the occasion; the old woman had on her showiest beads and other ornaments, with her most brilliant blanket across her shoulders, while the younger had her hair carefully brushed and thrown back over her shoulders, her neck bare to her bust, while on her bosom glittered one of my earlier presents; her feet and ankles to the knee were covered with new moccasins and leggings beautifully embroidered, while over all was worn a double-breasted half-coat half-dressing gown, made from a scarlet blanket, and secured at the waist with a belt of many-coloured

heads. Think as you will of such a costume, but I say, as far as I am a judge of female apparel, that this unsophisticated child of the forest looked exceedingly handsome, and more becomingly draped than if she had had the benefit of a Parisian or a London dressmaker. At other times I should have complimented her on her appearance, now I deemed it too dangerous to do so, for a certain flash from the corner of her sloe-black eye reminded me that I had seen such indicate that, well, say if in a horse, that it was about to kick over the traces. A child in bad temper is often thoroughly restored to good humour by the gift of a toy, so I resolved to put into practice the same *ruse*. Searching among my odds and ends, I found a brooch and ear-rings, such as are frequently to be seen attached to cards, and exhibited for sale at the fearfully modest price of one shilling a set. With the bauble I approached her, diffidently, I must say, for I did not feel quite certain how it would be received, and tendered it.

With a suddenness that took me by surprise she sprung to her feet and snatched it from me, then dashed it to the ground, and stamped her foot upon it, grinding it into the earth with her heel. To express astonishment was not my purpose, so I gazed at her with supreme nonchalance. And a handsomer figure,

or more commanding well-bred looking woman, though her skin was dark as a double-dyed gipsy, I never gazed on. Speak of fire flashing from eyes, it did literally; her thin nostrils expanded, while her bosom heaved and fell like the waves of ocean. My independence, I could observe, severely piqued her, for from the Juno look she first exhibited, her features altered to an expression of severe pain. I said nothing, asked nothing, but simply gazed at her. At length she broke down, staggered back, and rested against the wall, her head bent forward and buried in her hands; but no tears flowed, all that denoted life being the heaving of her half-stifled respiration. If would be wrong if any one for a moment supposed that I was not truly grieved for the poor girl, but what could I do, for any action of condolence or words of regret might be misconstrued, and thus in future only add to the severity of the ordeal she was now enduring.

To leave the wigwam I first deemed the better course, but, on after-thought, supposed it might be considered an insult; to remain was but to witness grief resulting from an excess of feeling, which I did not wish to see, for with all my apparent indifference I felt keenly for the poor untutored child of nature, whose fault was to love too strongly; but fortunately the very interruption occurred that was

most desirable; the old chief with stately formality walked into the cabin. Anger, so seldom seen there, was in his eye, for his first words expressed that his belief was that the women had betrayed to me his weakness in making them confidantes. Waving his hand and pointing to the door, he ordered them to leave, and when his wrath was aroused not even the partner of his bosom dared to disobey. In a moment the old lady went forth, defiant in look and unwilling in manner it is true; but not so his daughter, whose attitude still remained the quintessence of listless despair.

The old chief did not understand her non-compliance with his mandate. Rage, at what he supposed disobedience, marked his face, and he was stepping towards her, doubtless with the intention of dragging her forth, when I intervened. Glancing at me with surprise, he remained stationary; in a moment more I had led him out, and the poor girl was alone with her grief.

The old gentleman's equanimity was soon restored, when I told him that the women had said nothing of my intended departure, but listened with sad face to the narration of what had occurred. After a pause, looking on the ground he said:

"The red squaw wither in the white man's home,

like the leaves before the winter wind ; no more would she live without the wigwam and the canoe, than the moose without the forest and barren."

Shaking the good old man's hand we parted.

I was truly glad this affair was over, and that it had terminated so satisfactorily, for it would have been a serious matter if the father had been like-minded with the old lady ; and there was further room for gratification, that no one but the members of their own family were aware of what had transpired.

CHAPTER XIII.

SINCE my return I had not fished, and deeming it a good excuse to get out of the way for a few hours, I called the Indian lad and bade him bring my fishing gear. It was so long since it had been used that I suppose he found some difficulty in laying his hands upon all the paraphernalia, so I reached the pool I intended commencing at some time before he came up. While looking about me, my eye rested on a dear little familiar friend, one I have known from childhood, for it is found on both sides of the Atlantic; the bird I allude to was the common creeper (*Certhia familiaris*). Shunning observation, it is a diffident, gentle little creature, possessed of a wonderful faculty of gliding out of sight, or presenting itself without the observer being aware how it has gone or come; and the rapidity with which it shifts round the trunk or limb of a tree, one moment

with its head up, at another looking downwards, must be a matter of astonishment to all who are unacquainted with the formation of its feet and tail. I have said it is diffident; well, it possesses a strange anomaly of character, for it is so at one time, at others the reverse; it will approach so close as to be within ten or twelve feet of you, if its curiosity be excited, still ever manages to keep a twig or branch between it and the intruder in its haunts.

Whether there is a difference between the American and English varieties, such, for instance, as exists between the snipe of the respective countries—one or two feathers more or less in the wing or tail—I am not sufficiently expert an ornithologist to state, but to the casual glance they are exactly similar.

The nests of those creepers which I have found in England have invariably been in a diminutive hole in a tree, those in America outside, but screened from observation by some obstruction or excrescence in the bark. This may result from their deeming that intrusion or discovery is more improbable in less populated wilds of the latter land.

On the shell-bark hickory, one of the handsomest of trees, and one I often regret is not indigenous to Britain, is one of their favourite building places, but it requires no ordinary eyes and diligence of

search to discover its tiny little nest of finest withered blue grass interwoven with moss and lined with liliputian feathers. Its eggs, which generally number seven, are a white ground with light-brown or chocolate markings, more in the form of irregular lines than spots around the larger end, the lower extremity being occasionally entirely free from colour, or very slightly speckled.

The mature birds are capable of standing great severity of cold, for often, when deer shooting in the bitterest weather, they have kept frolicking about my stand, or followed me in my trudge through the woodland. However, they must be partially migratory, for I do not think they can pass through the severity and length of a winter in such high latitudes as my present position.

It is generally admitted that persons who reside in mountainous countries are superstitious; those that dwell in and on the margins of forest lands I know are; thus the backwoodsman will tell you, if he observes a creeper feeding with his head down, that it is no use searching for deer that day, and *vice versa*.

But here comes the boy.

"Why, sir, such a rueful countenance?"

Although convinced he did not understand my

question, he answered it with deep grief marked on his face.

"Capen, I fall and break rod."

"Well, no use being in such a stew over what was an accident."

And the poor fellow's visage brightened at once. What was the use of being cross? Have I not done the same with my own rod, and, doubtless, with my father's before I owned one? On examination it was a fracture of the tip. A few minutes, with the aid of my knife, a splice was made, and in a short time further all was as secure as previously. There is nothing like learning to be useful. If I had not, my fishing for that evening would have been lost; further, try and never lose your temper when an accident occurs, and, above all, when such takes place, particularly if a child be the cause, speak gently, for their feelings have not become hardened like ours through buffeting about in the rough world, and a word harshly spoken, even thoughtlessly, makes often a painful and long-lasting wound upon youth.

I found, as I expected, the water in splendid order, with possibly a little more wind than was desirable. This caused me to mount a larger fly than I should have done otherwise, but soon my choice proved itself correct, for at the second cast I hooked, and

afterwards landed, a splendid fish, and ere I reached the shanty, Master Sugar had quite a load.

Is it not strange, since I have returned Poteen scrupulously avoids me?—even deserts the boy when he is in my society—consequently I inquired of him the reason.

“Dog the same as man—he do bad, he too much ashamed.”

Well done, youngster, you are no mean observer of nature, Red-skin though you be.

Among the Indians there was a regular pow-wow this evening, for one had captured a black fox, the most valuable of all the fur-bearing animals of this region. The pelt is in prime condition, and consequently will make the fortunate possessor of it richer by one hundred dollars, taken out in store-goods, the intrinsic value of which will not exceed one-third that amount.

Russia and China are the countries to which they are exported, where I am informed only the highest nobles are permitted to wear them. What an extraordinary world we live in. Only fancy a poor little beast, that roamed at large over the Canadian wilds, living as best it may, and being regarded by the rest of the beast creation, yes, and possibly by itself, as a very ordinary creature, gracing with its

skin some pompous, overgrown, purse and learning proud mandarin, or a stately-miened handsome military prince of the Muscovite Empire, in either case thousands and thousands of miles from where the animal that produced it first saw light.

The night was so calm and still that after supper I wandered forth to listen to the anecdotes of the Indians, and smoke a pipe with them. To my surprise I found two of the young men preparing for a spearing excursion on the ford below where the canoes were generally beached. I must confess to having had a strong desire to prevent such unhallowed means being employed to capture the splendid fish of what I regarded as my own river ; but why should I interfere, in a week I should be gone, when the natives could do as they chose ; moreover, they were but following the instincts of their race, and the examples set them by their progenitors through successive generations. Food also was required, and under such circumstances even dislikes as strong as mine have a right to be waived. So I said nothing, and from the distance surveyed the scene, and it was one to be looked at, one to be admired, and, more, never forgotten.

Talk of romance, it was romantic in the extreme ; of wild grandeur it came up to all the mind could

imagine. The frail, buoyant, birch-bark canoe, the two muscular dark-skinned Indians, stripped to the waist, both standing erect, the one skilfully plying his long paddle, the other gracefully poising his spear, the whole lit up with the fierce lurid blaze of the birch-bark torch, the water surging round the craft, the surface of which breaking into a thousand ruby lights, while the glare, beyond the quaint old trees that margined the stream, made the distant darkness more impenetrable and forbidding. Deep and stealthily the paddle is dipped, skilfully and quickly the spear is struck, and the rising, struggling victim, momentarily held aloft before being thrown into the canoe, reflects a thousand lights from its silver-sheened sides. The deep "ugh!" of satisfaction from the performers when a more than skilful stroke was made, the echoes again and again repeating the applause of the lookers-on, the excited features, and doubly-excited manner of all, might have caused the observer to imagine that the river was in Hades, the spectators inhabitants of another world.

To spear fish upon a spawning-bed is wrong, unequivocally wrong, but never have I seen, never will see, I think, an exercise more manly, more inducive to skill and courage, more able to produce fearless and perfect boatmen, more attractive from associa-

tion and accessories. But as Antoine joined the group by which I was surrounded, and I had no desire to give him the slightest pretext for renewing my acquaintance, I reluctantly retired. On my way to the shanty I passed the camp where the old chief's family had taken up their residence. Over the glowing coals, now nearly burnt out, sat the two females of his household. The old woman, save that she smoked a very short and dirty pipe with such strong and rapid puffs as made her cheek inflate and contract with the regular stroke and rapidity of a bellows, looked like Hecate. The younger, her head enveloped in her garments, reminded me of many a sad creature seen upon a London door-step. Alas! where can we go not to find sorrow? where bury ourself, never to see grief? They are inseparable from man's lot. Sorrow and pleasure are to our life what sunshine and storm are to the vegetable world, and the palaces of the rich are no freer from it than the cabins of the peasant.

Another day has passed, and but five more remain ere (God willing) I shall leave this neighbourhood, probably for ever. For ever! What a mysterious expression! how definite, yet how incomprehensible. To think of it without sadness is impossible, still I cannot forbear the pleasure of associating once more

with my own race, and enjoying their society. To bid adieu to all the familiar scenes that surround me, that have become hallowed to my memory through frequent association with them, that have afforded me indescribable pleasure, that have witnessed my triumphs and disappointments in the chase, that have charmed the eye with their gorgeous foliage and hoary veteran trees, that have soothed my mind to rest and induced contemplations from which I have invariably arisen feeling benefited, and possessed of more charity for my fellow-labourers in the vineyard, that have recalled the merriest days of youth and the happiest of manhood—no, I cannot, will not depart without bidding them a fond farewell. An interview with Cariboo settled the point; with him as companion, I shall start to visit the beaver-dams on the morrow, and, if the weather continues fine, prolong our stay for two days.

Ruthlessly awoke from the pleasantest and most enjoyable portion of my sleep, that which occurs about an hour or two before the habitual time of rising, by all the Indian curs, and particularly Poteen, making a most discordant disturbance, was it surprising that I exclaimed "Confound the dogs!" and possibly wished each of their owners had strung them up before leaving their homes to bringing them here.

And to this turmoil was added the shrieking of squaws, imprecating the brutes for their bad behaviour, while every now and then a howl of pain would tell how skilful the female population were in the use of stones or other missiles. Determined not to be curtailed in my rest, I turned over and tried to sleep again. This I would doubtless have accomplished had not I detected several voices, in half-whispers, discussing the propriety of awakening me. It was evident that there was a difference of opinion on the subject, consequently the argument waxed warm, and the language louder. My lad and Cariboo protested against the step, while the others, who were evidently in the majority, insisted that it was time for all to be up, especially those calling themselves hunters. Under such circumstances, however much I desired it, sleep was impossible ; so, making a virtue of necessity, I left my couch. One soon learns to be expeditious in dressing when leading a primitive life, so I was not many minutes before becoming presentable. The cause of the disturbance was the arrival of the Indians who had rescued me from what I had christened the haunted promontory, a fine sensation name for a blood-and-thunder drama. Of course a hearty welcome was subtended to them, and they appeared as gratified at

seeing me, as I was to meet them. Without delay, they were invited to enter, and offered the seats of honour, but chairs or stools were not necessary, but rather the reverse to my visitors' comfort, so they declined occupying them with many a laugh and grin, ultimately selecting the bear-skin as a couch. My clothing, boots, gloves, fur cap, and especially my hunting paraphernalia, evoked their admiration, but my watch, compass, and some photographs, especially those of ladies, caused them to become mute with astonishment.

Their curiosity gratified, Cariboo, whom I had asked to officiate as master of the ceremonies, as well as to assist me unravelling such parts of their language I did not understand, got into a long, and evidently most amusing, conversation with the duo, judging from the expression of all. It was a description of the flight on the occasion of their discovering me. In the mean time I had given the boy instructions to prepare a feed upon a grand scale; but that my departure was near I should not have been so lavish of my stores; and as Master Sugar could not get on without my superintendence, I left my guests to be entertained by my henchman. Preserved soup, lobster, and bacon were the delicacies; a roast piece of venison and trout made into a chowder,

seasoned rather highly, and thickened with crushed biscuit, the stand-by. The old squaw from the first voluntarily assisted me, and after a time her daughter gave a helping hand, and the odours that arose around our out-door cook-house were most gratifying. From the shanty being so contracted in size, and always gloomy from the want of proper windows, our feast was to be *al fresco*.

The party was small and select, the old chief being the only invited guest, so that we should sit down five in all, myself at the head of the table, a guest on each side of me, and Cariboo and the old gentleman next each of the strangers. Like all housekeepers, I had my troubles, the most important of which was how we were to succeed for a relay of plates, for if more than one was used as a dish—half a dozen being my entire stock—some person would naturally be short of this necessary article. But a little thought showed me how to escape from the quandary. We should have birch-bark dishes, each description of food be served separately, and after it had been done justice to the plates gathered, soured in boiling water, wiped, and thus immediately again be ready for use. The soup, again, was a source of sad embarrassment, for the supply of spoons was limited to three, unless tea-spoons be included, when there were six; but they are not quite suited for the demolition

of soup while it retains its heat. Having spoken to Master Sugar on the subject, his invention served me ; for out of birch-bark he made a couple of scoops, big enough truly to hold half a pint of soup, but still useful in their way, when the chief object they were intended for was to transfer hot liquid from the plate to the mouth. The Indian lad knew well how to wait on me, so giving him such instructions as to attend exactly to what I told him, shut his ears to conversation, however amusing, and on no account permit himself to be hurried or become nervous, I dismissed him.

Doubtless my guests, in the goodly company of Cariboo, received some idea from him of what was the cause of my so frequently deserting them ; still the inherent politeness of the race induced them to make no remarks, or, I believe, even look after me to ascertain the prospects of having a satisfactory meal, but this did not prevent them enjoying a cup of coffee—more sugar than anything else—and making an awful inroad into my tobacco. As the steaming, spluttering, bubbling pots indicated that the time approached when their contents would be ready for consumption, with strict injunctions to the cooks that on no account were they to be permitted to boil over, I visited the old chief, told him the programme, and

on our way to the shanty begged of him to explain to the strangers what white men's ways were, at the same time giving them the hint to do as he or I did. Having introduced the old gentleman to my visitors, I called out Cariboo, and gave him the same instructions, sending him back to impart them. I enter into these minutiae to show that successfully to carry out a dinner-party, especially among guests such as I had to entertain, it was as necessary to use finesse, and be acquainted with details, as it is for a general before he can acquit himself creditably in handling a large body of troops.

Having explained the rotation with which I desired the various viands to be served, believing it would not tend to elevate me in the eyes of the lookers on, I retired to the river instead of to the shanty, to put the finishing touches to my toilet. My ablutions completed, and my beard and hair arranged in presentable shape, I once more visited the kitchen to give final instructions, with further information that nothing was to be served till we had taken our seats at our respective places. Believing all the machinery in working order, I adjourned to the shanty, there made a short speech, interrupted much by its interpretation, and more than half misunderstood, then invited my guests to adjourn to the banquet.

Getting one of the strangers on my arm while the old chief took the reverse flank, followed by the other under the guidance of Cariboo, we reached the dining-table, at least so I will call it, and took our seats. This was accomplished without disorder—an augury of success.

The lobster came first; each was abundantly served, but none commenced to eat the unknown substance till I set an example. Duly explaining what it was, all commenced work, and satisfaction was expressed on every countenance. Taking up a phial of cayenne pepper, I assisted myself to a small quantity, placing it on the edge of my plate. This was not unnoticed, for first one of the strangers, then another, did likewise, and with no sparing hand; the consequence was that in a few minutes both were in a profuse perspiration, ultimately followed by coughing and choking, so severe, that I feared for the result. A white man would have become red under such an ordeal; my guests became blue. Water was imbibed in an unlimited quantity, and the tears fairly coursed down their cheeks, but not a smile dared I permit myself to show. At length time gave each relief, when the first question the elder asked me was, whether such powder as that would not shoot better than what the traders sold the Indians?

I explained that it was not used for that purpose ; however, he insisted that it have "plenty more fire than powder Indian get."

In due course the lobster was removed, the plates washed, and soup placed upon the table. My shallow metal plates were scarcely suited for such a liquid substance, but then needs must. The lad, Sugar, had served extremely well ; but it is no easy matter to carry liquid in a shallow dish, and, as ill-luck would have it, he emptied the whole contents of one over the head and face of the stranger next me. It was nearly boiling hot when I served it ; doubtless, it had cooled a little before the accident occurred, still must have been far from an agreeable salute.

With the exception of an interjection of "ugh !" the unfortunate recipient of the salute said nothing, although he shook his head like a water-spaniel after a protracted swim, and an evidence of pain exhibited itself for a moment in his countenance.

This was the last *contretemps*, all afterwards went admirably, and when the last course was removed good-fellowship beamed on the countenance of all, and they yawned, stretched themselves, and patted their stomachs with the complacency of a civilised gourmand, certainly with less ostentation than can occasionally be seen among our City fathers—much

to the admiration of the uninvited, who stood around envying their lot, and regretting that they were not among the guests. At length the time for smoking came, the outsiders were invited to partake of the luxury, and bore that position in respect to the originals of the feast as in England is occupied by those receiving late invitations, that is, to arrive in sufficient to get the probability of a chance to have a worry at supper. However, here, whatever might be felt elsewhere, no jealousies were exhibited, possibly being under the eye of their chief was the reason, for all went merrily as a marriage bell. The scene must have been intensely picturesque and novel to those that were ignorant of such a life; eight or nine swarthy warriors reclining upon skins in every conceivable attitude, attended by their squaws in their party-coloured garments, handsome trees shading off the warm, rich rays of the autumnal sun, while the bright sparkling river rushed past in all the glory of its mad headlong career. The tongues of all had become loosened, and narratives of adventures by flood and field, jokes and anecdotes, were the order of the day, when a shout from the bank by the boat-house instantly brought all, excepting myself, to their feet. In a moment afterwards every one, even the squaws, were rushing headlong to learn the cause of

the summons. My curiosity being excited, I followed the example set me. On reaching the crowd, I was not long kept in ignorance of the reason of the stampede, for half way up the reach was advancing a large canoe, under the united efforts of four powerfully-handled paddles. Each of the strangers, arms and necks bare, stood up to their task, and made their deep, powerful stroke with the precision and regularity of a well-trained crew. Although the current was not slow, the light-draught canoe slid over its surface with a speed truly surprising, so that in a few minutes more their craft's head was pointed to the beach, and in a moment after they had disembarked.

Who are they? was my first question; and, in response, had answer from half a dozen mouths that they were from the tribe where Antoine had spent the summer.

CHAPTER XIV.

THEY were all extremely fine specimens of the Indian, young, active, and well made; one in particular, who stood almost six feet in his moccasins, and who appeared to be both leader and spokesman of the party, had a singularly handsome face, and most intelligent cast of countenance. It was quite apparent that I was known to them by report, for, after the old chief had given them a few words of welcome, they turned to me, holding out their hands to be shaken in a manner that indicated that it was a mode of salute, although known to them, seldom practised. Hospitality being deemed the superlative duty of all in these distant wilds, they were forthwith invited to eat—an invitation that was promptly accepted. Fortunately a large portion of our feast was left; to this was added some fresh fish, and the manner the stran-

gers stowed away the provender indicated that they had been lately on short commons.

Much too familiar with the character of the aborigines of North America to expect any information from them till the inward man was satisfied, I waited patiently for them to finish. If patience is a virtue, I certainly possess one, and on this occasion it was severely taxed. At length all desisted—the cessation being caused, in my belief, from their inability to contain more food.

After a short conversation between the old chief and the handsome brave, all of which was unintelligible to me, the latter rose, and in a short and energetic speech—interpreted by Cariboo—stated that they had welcomed a stranger among them; that he had gained their confidence, ultimately obtained their furs, under the promise of paying for them when he reached here, and that he had broken his word; the result of which would entail misery on his people during the coming winter, as it was probably now too late in the season to take them to the nearest trading fort, which was many days to the north of their home. Their furs, or the goods promised them, they were determined to have, and hoped that neither the Red-men that surrounded them or I would assist Antoine if he refused to do them justice. On the spokesman resuming his seat, I had a consultation

with the old chief and Cariboo, both of whom at once, without a moment's hesitation, supported me in my resolution not to shield the aggressor, but use every effort to force him to do justice to his victims.

Antoine and the Indians who had arrived with him, had established a camp about half a mile up the river; there he had his purloined treasure stored, and as he had not been seen all day, or any of his attendants, who were members of the same tribe as the new-comers, he was probably unaware of the proximity of the storm that was ready to burst about his shoulders.

At length the four strangers rose, and accompanied by two of our people as guides, left. Although I felt reluctant at their departure, fearing that blood would be shed, I deemed it better not to interfere, but let events take their course, so for the time being dismissed the matter from my thoughts.

My two rescuers had not yet been paid; as they were desirous of departing for home as soon as possible, leaving the coterie who had dined with me, reinforced now by the squaws and one or two more of the old chief's people, I went to the wigwam to procure the necessary articles to remunerate them with, adding to them some trifling gewgaws.

Truly, the Indian is a child, for when they beheld these useless additions, their tawdry brilliancy eclipsed

in their eyes the value of the useful portion of their recompense. After explaining the uses, no short lesson, to which brooches, ear-rings, &c. were to be put, we all sat down to a final smoke and cup of coffee.

Conviviality was at its height, each was explaining and telling the other how mutual was the pleasure their visit had afforded them, when distant voices attracted our attention. Turning to see its producers we learned that it was the Indians returning from Antoine's—the majority of whom carried a load. "Well, this is better than anticipated; the Frenchman has thought better of the matter and given up his ill-gained possessions." Such was the impression that passed through my mind; but on the new-comers, now reinforced by their three companions, joining us, the erroneousness of my surmise was speedily explained, for my late *employé* being absent fishing or trapping, the Indians had at once taken possession of the property misappropriated by the Frenchman, and without delay brought it here for transshipment.

I urged the expediency of their using expedition; but no, all I could do or say was useless; the attractions of a final talk, a farewell pipe, and a proposition that I should trade with them, were too great to be resisted, so all gave way to the two former plea-

tures. Not to embroil myself or allow it to become possible that I had taken any interest in their affairs, I persistently refused to entertain any proposition in reference to becoming the possessor of their furs.

Half an hour might have so passed when Antoine, excited almost to frenzy, rushed among us. The baggage seemed to be the first object his attention was directed to; but the Indians in a moment sprang to their feet, intervened between him and it, showing indisputably that they were prepared to do battle before they would submit to be again deprived of it. His courage no one could gainsay; even with such odds against him, I believe he would have accepted the gauntlet; but by chance he caught sight of me, and I suppose for a moment thought that I could be made useful in settling the affair amicably. But although he used every oath his vocabulary contained, gesticulated, and argued that all was his, honestly his, pleaded, prayed, beseeched me to stand by him and help him to "wipe out the whole boiling," I refused to interfere unless he could satisfy me that he had come honestly by them; but this he could not do, for he possessed absolutely nothing when he left me excepting what I had loaned him, and that was not one eighth part sufficient to purchase the valuable furs he had obtained.

Finding his persuasions and entreaties vain, he now heaped upon me the vilest of abuse, called me coward, skunk, dog, and then politely invited me to come into the open and fight it out. To such a modest proposal I also refused to accede, but this he stated did not surprise him. After a pause, in which he had moved further from me and the Indians who were clustered round me, he recommenced his tirade:

"I was in collusion with Indians to rob him, I had assisted them to take his furs from him that I might have them myself. No, he was d—d if I should."

And with a rapidity that appeared impossible, he drew his revolver and pressed the trigger. Instinctively I saw his aim was true, so threw myself to one side. The movement saved my life—but next instant a second barrel, less correctly aimed, but sufficiently accurate to graze my side and arm, was fired. From behind me a shrill scream rent the air; I turned to know who was the unfortunate—to my indescribable grief it was the old chief's daughter, who, poor child, so severely was she stricken that she now lay upon the ground weltering in her gore.

I did not wait to know if I was further to be made a target, but sprung to the luckless creature's side, as all seemed petrified by the misfortune and incapable of action. The old chief on his knees moaned with an-

guish, and in a few moments looked as if he had aged as many years. Never till now did I know the depth with which he loved his handsome, wayward daughter. Still, no assistance was forthcoming, the emergency of the occasion causing me to feel that I was justified in acting, so I tore her dress apart at the neck, drew it back over her right breast, and there discovered a livid spot, slightly marked with blood; but, alas! trifling as the wound appeared, well, well I knew the probable result to the bearer of it.

Obtaining assistance we raised this forest flower and bore her to my shanty. On my couch we placed her, and although her tongue moved not, her lustrous eyes, now flushed with pain, spoke a thousand thanks. Giving the mother-in-law what instructions I deemed necessary for the patient's comfort, I stuck my revolver, freshly loaded, in my belt, and a ball cartridge in each barrel of my double gun. I felt as I went forth that possibly indirectly, still I had something to do with this poor Indian girl's misfortune, and fear very much, although to shed human blood would to me be a deed I never could regard otherwise than with horror, that if the cause of this sad episode had been within range, I should then and there have done my utmost to slay him.

Outside I found an angry assembly awaiting me ; the excitement of the moment which had swamped their powers to act had passed, and all believed it their duty to assist in securing the would-be assassin. My appearance among them armed told that I was of their mind, so I was welcomed with sincerity, if not with demonstration.

I could not help inquiring, for I knew that several of the Indians were in possession of weapons when the sad affair occurred, why they had not shot him down? From none did I receive a direct answer, but have little doubt that the colour of the villain's skin was to what he owed his safety.

For myself, when the fracas took place, I was not armed with aught but my knife, and although I feared the vindictiveness of the man's character, until he declared himself hostile—and that was done so suddenly—I disliked to go or send for my firearms. But where was the blackguard now? After firing the second shot he had fled towards the canoes, and no one having attempted to stop his flight, by this time was doubtless several miles down the river.

Master Antoine little knew the unfaltering sleuth hounds he had provoked to pursue him, or I believe he would have amputated his fingers ere he would

have permitted one of them on such an occasion to press a trigger.

As in all matters where the Anglo-Saxon is associated with the half-civilised or barbarous inhabitants of a country, I was at once looked to as commandant. In favour of the old chief I would gladly have waived my position, but the poor old fellow was fairly beside himself with grief. Nevertheless, he would not be left behind; but true to his patrician lineage, volunteered to occupy a subservient place in the cause of justice.

Delay is so often defeat, that I urged expedition. In a few minutes we had provisions for seven days in one of the canoes, and ammunition for the capture of a stockade in our pouches; but I could not go without bidding the poor girl good-bye, and giving further instructions for her comfort. My knowledge of surgery is but limited, still I know what will give relief to a sufferer placed in such a strait, so I re-entered the wigwam. My presence by her side was immediately detected, and although no welcome was accorded in words it was in looks. I took the almost pulseless hand in mine; in the arm appeared no power, while the skin felt dry and feverish.

Wiping away the blood that soiled her lips, I ex-

plained to the old squaw that this was not to be neglected, that perfect quiet was to be enforced, and that when the patient appeared faint she was to have a few spoonfuls of some weak brandy and water. A drowsiness had now stolen over the victim, so I slipped away, harder in heart and more unforgiving and unrelenting than ever I had previously felt.

My boy I left behind to guard my effects, with instructions that here he was to remain till my return, and do all in his power to assist the old woman in her task ; in fact, serve her and her patient as faithfully as he had ever done me. Without a murmur he expressed his willingness, although well I knew how much better he would have been pleased to accompany me.

But time was an object, we had a powerful crew and a new craft, the rapidly-handled paddles fairly lifted her from the water, and we rushed almost with the velocity of a steamboat past snags, trees, rocks, and pools.

My hunting canoe the half-bred Frenchman had appropriated ; it was a small one, built to carry two persons, capable on an emergency of supporting three. With the advantage of the current in his favour, doubtless he could obtain considerable speed, more especially when he must well know that his life pro-

bably depended on the result; but for all that, we could do three miles for his two, and keep up the pace, which a single arm, more especially if not in training, would be unable.

To myself it appeared a puzzle where the recreant could go, where he would find shelter, and how he was to live until he did. But not so with the Indians, from the first they expressed a decided belief that the Mission, four or five days distant, would be the sanctuary he would make for.

The exercise, cool air, and change of scene had acted most beneficially upon the old chief; once more he was himself again, and the youngest of the crew did not handle his paddle with greater dexterity and strength.

We had been three hours embarked, the sun was nigh touching the distant tree-tops, as we entered a long straight stretch of comparatively calm water, when the keen eyes of the pursuers distinguished the canoe of the fugitive rounding a point where the stream took a curve. The chase was now truly exciting, and well for the paddles that they were seasoned, for they were plied with a vigour that no other wood could withstand. Down the centre of the stretch we shot, at a pace certainly not under six miles an hour. In a short time the

point was rounded where the foe had disappeared; but unfortunately from here the river was as erratic in its course as it is possible to imagine; pools and rapids were passed in rapid succession, one moment skimming over the surface on level keel, the next bounding over the surging foam.

Night was rapidly approaching, and at the pace we had been rushing onward, must ere this have overtaken the pursued, but the Indians seemed unwilling to admit that such could be the case, so with undaunted vigour continued exerting their strength for another mile, when it became obvious that we had got the slip, and that with all the cunning of the Indians, they had a proficient to contend with, Master Antoine having doubtlessly landed immediately after doubling a point, and walked inland, taking the canoe with him, so that his place of disembarkation should not be discovered by us in our passage downwards.

Two widely different things are floating with the current of a rapid stream to returning against its powerful force. Without a murmur or word of complaint the canoe was put about, and renewed energy and determination displayed to cope with the difficulties now to be contended against. I am not certain that the reticence displayed by the dusky

crew at being outwitted, was not intended as a compliment to the person who gave evidence of such knowledge of strategy. It was now night, not even gloaming, but Providence seemed to favour our work, for a large full moon rose over the tree-tops, and with her cold silvery light pointed out our course, unless in such places as the thick sombre foliaged cedars and hemlocks obtruded a barrier to its advance. And the stars joined in their good offices, and shone as brightly as ever it was my lot to see them. But the erratic course of the river, fringed as it was over the greater part of its course, possessed nooks and reaches shrouded in such impenetrable darkness that no mortal eye could discover a fugitive or evidence of his presence, unless by the most careful and close inspection. Knowing that such was the case, and the delay that must occur to thoroughly examine both sides of the stream on our route upwards, I proposed that we should at once ascend to where we had lost sight of our foe, commencing the search on both sides of the river from there, working downwards, while the canoe, mid-stream, was kept abreast of those hunting for the trail.

It must have been midnight ere we recovered our lost ground, and then it was deemed better to

rest, that in the morning, when the fresh invigorating rays of the sun revealed all that was observable to human eye, all might feel fit and keen to renew the task they had undertaken.

Such an unexpected and painful *dénouement* had resulted to my kind and ever considerate friends from my bringing with me to their peaceful home a man I knew nothing of, that I felt most poignantly that I, although unwittingly, had been the primary cause of their grief.

The more I thought and brooded over the matter, the more unforgiving and unrelenting I felt against the aggressor. Then the poor victim, prostrate on what was in all probability her last resting-place in life, would rise before me, her large pleading eyes ever from the darkness of the surrounding wood seemed gazing into mine as if upbraiding me for having treated her with indifference. If she had loved me, was it her fault? could the poor untutored child of nature help observing the distinction between the civilised man and the savage, and make her choice in accordance with it? No! and it would be a poor compliment to our boasted enlightenment if we thought otherwise. I am not vain enough to imagine it was my person attracted her, but believe any of my countrymen situated as

I had been would have been received the same. No; it was but the contrast between the indifference she received from her own race, and the courtesy paid her by the stranger that caused her to form an estimate entirely in favour of the latter.

CHAPTER XV.

WITH the first glimmer of daylight all were up and ready for a fresh start. Two of our company were transported to the other side of the stream, the others remaining on the side where we had slept, each party's duty being to hunt the margin for evidence where our foe had landed, while I remained midway between them, ready to transport either across to the side their services were required upon. But a short time had the search progressed when a whistle called me into the left bank; the old chief pointed me out a piece of rag covered with pitch adhering to the trunk of a partially submerged cedar that projected from the bank. In a moment I recognised it as what I had used to caulk the vessel with. In drawing her ashore it had been scraped off the craft's bottom by the rough bark. As the soil around was soft and swampy, with little undergrowth from being subject

to overflow, no difficulty was found in discovering the renegade's tracks. And as there was no sign of the canoe, and the impressions from his feet were deep, the scoundrel had doubtless carried it with him. For several hundred yards we followed the trail; here the pursued had evidently halted, for an indentation showed that he had leaned the canoe against a tree, the reverse end on which it rested making a hollow of several inches in the soft black soil.

Here we were again at fault, but not long so, for one of the younger Indians discovered a fresh trail leading back to the river. How this break had been made in the track was accounted for by the fugitive having mounted a windfall, walking along it till he reached some dead timber; this he had doubtless also used to tread on, as he had retraced his steps to the river margin. On reaching the stream, again we were thrown out; however, it was improbable that a person trying to avoid us would go down with the current, knowing us to be below, or cross and take the right bank, as it was the verge of a district traversed daily by members of the old chief's tribe; from these reasons we resolved to search the western bank upwards.

Disembarking again at the point where we had passed the night, with undaunted energy in spite

of the disappointments they had encountered, the Indians recommenced their labour, when after advancing nearly a mile, a slow plaintive whistle called us together ; it was where an otter slide occurred, and the fugitive had taken advantage of it to disguise traces of his landing. But the penetrating eyes of the Indian are not easily deceived, for with unfailing precision they pointed it out, moreover took up the trail, and followed it with the ease that a hound would a hot scent.

This was encouraging, and we all commenced to look forward to a speedy and successful termination of our expedition, when the canoe was found, cut in several places across the bottom, and the gunwale broken, doubtlessly done that now the scoundrel had no further use for it, no one else should have its services.

This discovery only caused a temporary delay ; forward we advanced till four or five miles must have been traversed, and we commenced to leave the low ground for dry and more elevated land, making our progress much slower from the additional difficulty of keeping the track. Here the Indians held a consultation ; there appeared perfect unanimity in their opinions, so one of the party was dismissed to examine a ford some miles ahead, while the others made

the utmost exertion to follow the trail; but the labour was exceedingly trying. Still no evidence of impatience was displayed, their work was done as thoroughly and as uncomplainingly as at the start. To my knowledge food had not crossed some of their lips since the pursuit had commenced, yet they manifested the same lithesome activity, the same zeal in the cause of their chief, as if they had been the best housed, best fed retainers.

The control that an Indian chief exercises over his followers has something inexplicable about it, and certainly worthy of the greatest admiration. They receive no emoluments of any description, patronage or partiality would in no way benefit them—in fact, there is nothing that the chief can do to improve their condition or reward their service—yet they are ever at his beck and call, willing to go to war or accept peace, to be friends or foes, in fact, anything that is demanded of them. The majority of these are hereditary, but failing an heir, then the person to rule them is selected, to whom, once they give their allegiance, it almost amounts to an impossibility to make them renounce their oath. Talk of loyalty! how many of we civilised, highly-educated, enlightened people might go to the aborigines of North America, the benighted heathen, the unredeemed savage,

and learn what it is in the true acceptation of the term.

We had been halted some time, to enjoy a ration of biscuit I had served, when we were rejoined by the young man who a couple of hours previously had been detached on special service. The information he brought was apparently important ; soon it was communicated to me. Antoine had forded a river three or four miles ahead, and, by taking such a course, he was doubtless directing his steps, as previously supposed, to the Mission, where the familiar-named white squaw lived.

A council of war was at once held. The chief proposed, and all agreed with him, that our force was not sufficiently strong to successfully carry out our expedition if Antoine had gone there. So a messenger should at once be despatched for three or four more of the tribe, who were to use every expedition to overtake us while we marched slowly forward. No sooner said than done. In five minutes afterwards might have been seen a young brave, going at the long swinging trot peculiar to his race, making rap for the river.

Although nominally the head of the party, still I knew not the country through which we were proceeding, nor could I compete with the Indians in

tracking; so my command was more honorary than real, the old chief being the person referred to on all occasions of moment, who, in spite of being full of years, proved himself thoroughly equal to any emergency that might arise.

Cutting across country, to avoid the delay of tracking, and possibly making a detour, we reached the stream alluded to, where tracks of the fugitive had been discovered. It was deep and sluggish-looking, at the same time remarkably straight. As far as the eye could see in either direction, there was nothing to indicate a ford, except at the point where we stood, and there, true enough, in the clammy, alluvial soil that margined it, were fresh moccasin tracks, apparently worn by a white man, as the toes were turned out. After fording the stream, which was waist deep, and now at this season icy cold, we again found the footmarks, which we were able to trace for some distance, but lost again as soon as we got to the high grounds. So fresh were these indications of man's presence that but a few hours must have elapsed since they were made, so that twelve or fourteen miles at most separated the pursuer from the pursued. The old chief now felt convinced that his surmise was correct, and that the assassin was making for the mission-house, as, with the exception of one or two wandering

families, whose camping-places scarcely ever continued two weeks the same, there was no human habitation except it he could expect assistance from.

Sundry proposals for making a detour were advanced, so as to head the fugitive, but the old chief, not feeling equal to the exertion of a forced march, or not wishing to peril the lives of his followers, who might expose themselves if permitted to go ahead without him, forbade such a plan being thought of. Pushing forward at a steady, if not a hurried gait, although tracking in many places had become impossible from the rockiness and dryness of the soil, frequently we came across indications that the object of our pursuit had unquestionably passed that way. He must have deemed himself safe and free from all chance of pursuit, doubtless considering the trick he played us on the river sufficient to prevent our discovering his fresh starting-point, for he had evidently captured, if not shot, a Canadian grouse, which he had plucked as he walked, for the feathers, from the stillness of the atmosphere and the damp that hung on the shrubs, still adhered to them in sufficient numbers to mark his route.

Very confident must the blackguard have been to be guilty of so reckless a proceeding, for well he must have known that his life would most certainly

be forfeited if he fell into the pursuers' hands, if no one was there to plead for him who had sufficient interest to be listened to. And why should I interfere in his behalf, for was not I the victim he intended to sacrifice? No, no; time enough to say what I will do when asked for assistance; and there is too much of the wolf in Master Antoine's character—that obstinacy that causes the animal to make his jaws close on his assailant with his last breath—for him to stoop to petition me for aid.

A slight illumination to the north-west of our halting-place foretold the probability of it being the reflection of the fugitive's camp fire. Cariboo and the other young brave wished to set out as soon as it was discovered, and capture, if necessary kill, its maker, provided they found their surmises correct. The chief refused peremptorily to sanction such a course, in which I supported him, for well I knew what it meant, viz., that they would steal close to where their intended prey lay, wait till the dark cold hour before morning, and, when the fire had probably almost died out, shoot their foe at close quarters, or brain him with their tomahawks. Moreover, for all either of us knew, murder had not been committed, and unless death resulted from his pistol-shot, I would in no way countenance the taking of the man's life.

I felt that I had to be very guarded in my conduct in the affair, for I did not wish to be accused of lukewarmness because the offender was a white man; at the same time I owed my country and self a duty to prevent an excess of zeal on the part of the pursuers. It was arranged after breakfast that we should remain at our present halting-place till joined by the reinforcement, so, with Cariboo as companion, I ascended one of the highest ridges in the vicinity to obtain a view over the country we were about to traverse. The timber that covered it was principally pine, and far as the eye could see there was no indication of large water-courses. I do not mean to say that there were no rills wide enough to step over, because between each ridge such could be found; but nothing larger; so that if the lumberman should in future visit this locality he will find the labour of getting the logs out more than sufficient to eat up the remuneration for his toil.

From the utter stillness that reigned around, and the undeviating similarity of the scene—ridge after ridge appearing a counterpart of its neighbours, and the whole surmounted with the same sombre foliaged trees, they varying so little in form that it had the most depressing effects upon my spirits—sincerely I wished that circumstances had not oc-

curred to bring me here ; further, I had a duty to perform that now the angry flush of passion had passed over, was far from agreeable. Moreover, the season was getting so late, that it promised almost to be impossible for me to reach civilisation this year ; for our return to the shanty would not occur for many days, whereas, if the necessity of this expedition had not taken place, I should have been on the verge of starting for home, when nothing would be allowed to delay me that human agency could overcome.

My companion had discovered a porcupine's retreat. Not to use an effort to capture such a wholesome and savoury addition to our larder, he would have deemed neglecting the good things Providence placed in his way, so with heart and soul he devoted himself in enlarging the orifice so as to reach his prey. As frequently happens when persons are employed in the woods, they are visited by some of its tiny residents either to watch what they are about, or with the hope of obtaining a meal through their agency. The little strangers were a party of those saucy, charming, ever-welcome, active little fellows, blue-caps (*Parus cæruleus*), the same bird that is so well known at home, and a special favourite with every school-boy. In the northern portion of the North-American continent where timber abounds,

they are extremely numerous. As I observed these companions of my childhood, scenes far distant arose before me. Places where I had found their nests, a hole in an apple-tree, a chink in some shrub-clad wall, or even in the spout of an old pump, were recalled to memory, and how the valiant little mother would puff herself out in her enmity at her discoverers, and nip their fingers if bold enough to intrude their hands. Again, I could recollect being so cruel, and getting deservedly well punished for my conduct, depriving the fussy little parent of her voluminous nest of moss and feathers, and an endless number of pretty little white eggs sparsely marked with tiny red spots. Aye, nearly thirty years have passed since then, still the remembrance of them is as fresh as if they occurred but yesterday. And here, so far away from the scene of these exploits, are their cousins as impudent and prying as those across the wide Atlantic ocean.

I was not long in learning the object that attracted them and induced them to favour us with their society. It was not the love of company as some might imagine, far more selfish motives were the incentive. Cariboo had removed and pulled to pieces in his labours an old decayed log, throwing the different portions some feet behind him; this rotten timber was perfectly honey-combed with ants,

and their eggs were laid bare and exposed on every fragment; and the activity and appetite displayed by my feathered pets in collecting their favourite food was truly surprising. I have often wondered at the Indian's capacity for stowage of food; but here they had not a chance in rivalry if consumption in proportion to size of body be considered. But the prickly beast had been secured, so I bid the wee birdies good-bye, and left them uninterrupted to enjoy the good things that Providence had provided for them.

It is a curious circumstance and worthy of consideration, that the northern and temperate parts of North America possess many birds and quadrupeds almost identical with those of the same regions of Europe. As these must have had a common origin, and are capable of standing severe cold, which is their fatherland? and how did they travel from the one to the other? Over regions unknown to us far up to the north where the seas that divide the continents are narrow and broken by the occurrence of numerous islands or connected by fields of ice.

In the temperate regions of South Africa, Australia, and South America this does not occur, for there are no species of the one land common to the other, because they are severed by oceans too wide for the

feathered families to traverse, and the belt of tropics that intervenes between north and south is so insuperable a barrier against migration that if attempted it never appears to be done so with success. One exception to this I know, viz., the snipe, for I have shot them south of the equator, and apparently identical with those of Northern Europe. But this leads me to believe that the snipe does not go north of the temperate zone, and so, although capable of enduring severe cold, could not submit to the severity of an Arctic winter, if even it were, under such circumstances, able to procure food, which it could not after frost has set its stamp on the country.

CHAPTER XVI.

ON reaching our rendezvous, we found that the old chief had killed some grouse, which he had already prepared for cooking. This, combined with Cariboo's fortune, was most acceptable, for our supply of provisions was limited, and in a few hours there would be more mouths to feed, and short commons has almost as demoralising an effect upon Indians as upon white men. True the former, if entirely deprived of food, would live nearly double the length of time that a European would, but, with all their stoicism and this advantage, they have a very great objection to an empty stomach. Before dark we were joined by the reinforcement, who looked sorely travel-stained, for they had not lagged by the way. One of the new arrivals had with him an indescribable cur dog, almost destitute of hair, which was reported to possess the quality of running a human trail. Whether this be true or not, the fugitive would have little to fear from its

ferocity, for a well-directed kick or cut of a cane would immediately have rendered the creature *hors de combat*.

As soon as the moon was sufficiently elevated to give us the assistance of its light, a fresh start was made, the course being across country without any sign of a trail, our line of march as usual in Indian file, the only mode ever adopted by the aborigines. This tramp was extremely fatiguing to me, as my eyes being less keen than my companions', I constantly kept toeing stumps, or falling over boughs and limbs that had dropped from the surrounding trees. Not a whisper was spoken by any of the party, and, but for my floundering about, the *cortège* might have passed within fifty yards of a vigilant sentinel without being detected. For the advance-guard of an army, for scouting and outpost duty, these people would be invaluable, and although individually they are not able physically to cope with a white man, still they are possessed of courage and wonderful powers of endurance, and for forced marches, even when hampered with a load, the speed and facility with which they adapt themselves to the circumstances of any position that may arise, is truly wonderful. The supposition of the old chief was again correct; the fugitive had crossed a rivulet

some hours in our advance—footsteps, crushed grass, and trampled-down brush told the tale. So, unless the pursued should become alarmed, and double back, no doubt existed in our minds that he was making his way to the Mission.

Being satisfied with the result, a halt for some hours was called. During this the old chief and myself held a consultation, when it was decided that every effort should be made to effect Antoine's capture without disabling or even wounding him. When our resolve was made public it evidently created great dissatisfaction among our followers. One went so far as to attempt to argue the matter, the pith of his speech being that, suppose the would-be assassin had been an Indian instead of a white man, such leniency would not have been shown him; therefore in our eyes the white man was better than the Indian. How was he better? He knew more, could read and write, lived in communities where laws existed, and were strictly enforced against evil doers. Thus the white man, who had these advantages, and possessed all this knowledge, when guilty of a crime should be more severely dealt with than a poor ignorant Indian committing the same fault. In this there was doubtless much truth. The old chief seemingly also thought so, and that if he attempted arguing the

matter he would have been worsted, so, rising on his feet in the graceful manner I have so often seen him do when he had something of importance to communicate, waving his hands to call for silence, simply said, "It is my will." And from that instant not a further question on the propriety of the resolution was mooted.

Next morning when our start was made the dog was tried. For a length of time the animal did not seem to understand what was required of him, and no wonder, for the trail was now many hours' old and therefore cold; however, at length he settled to his work, but incessantly kept giving tongue, a circumstance that if his services had been continued till we came near the fugitive would have put him on his guard, thus giving him time to prepare his weapons for defence, and prevent our taking him by surprise. So the cur had a string put round his neck, and was handed over to the care of his owner.

The course Antoine pursued must have been a marked way, although when we came upon it or crossed it, I could see no indication that such was the case, for the Indians always appeared to be able to cross his trail, and that without any apparent difficulty.

The want of larger water-courses than the most diminutive rivulets was one of the marked peculiarities of the country through which we were proceeding; the ground, unless on the margin of these, was seldom swampy, and the quantity of timber, which appeared illimitable, was not so large, although quite as dense, as that in the vicinity of the shanty. Doubtless some day this will be a grand sheep country, but even if emigration poured into it to-morrow, that date must be some time distant, for it will take twenty years at least after the trees have been felled to get rid of the stumps, aye possibly longer than that, for of all uncompromising things with a power to resist decay, well known to the settler's cost, the pine-stump takes the lead. On our tramp I have frequently observed deer tracks, and other indications of their presence, but so far have not seen any, although the Indians are frequently reporting their viewing them. My never taking the lead, and their eyes being more keen than mine to detect the presence of animal life, doubtless accounts for this. A hare now partially white with black tips to its ears is very common; its resemblance to the mountain or blue hare of Scotland is no greater than similarity of colour, for the animal of this region is much more compact in build, and gifted, I should

think, with more cunning and less agility; moreover, it is an inhabitant of the timber lands, the other of the bleak hill-sides. The Canadian grouse (*Tetrao Canadensis*) is also frequently flushed, when they take shelter in the nearest limb, their confidence in man's good intentions, the wonderful amount of curiosity they display, and the grotesque attitudes they get into to gratify it, being ludicrous in the extreme.

That night another consultation was held. It was evident to all that the fugitive had now no idea of retracing his steps, and endeavouring to reach civilisation at present, but to push on to the Mission, either to make it a halting-place till chance would afford him an opportunity of going further, or if not remaining there till spring opened. Such being the case it was determined to hurry forward, so as to get in advance of him and intercept him a mile or two from his destination, as it was probable that his near approach to it, without having learned any evidence of pursuit, would, from conscious security, induce him to be off his guard, and so be more easily made a prisoner.

The details of the next two days' march are destitute of interest, for the same monotonous forest surrounded us, and the rivulets no larger than here-

tofore had exactly the same characteristics. It was night when we reached the place destined for our ambuscade. The spot was admirably suited for such a purpose: a dip between two ridges covered with brush and dwarf timber, where a stream about twenty yards wide was crossed by a path, evidently made by the frequenters of the Mission, which was only two miles distant. Four men were left close to the brook's margin, while I and the others crossed over and secreted ourselves on the river side. My services could have been dispensed with, but I feared that the young Indians might in their passion vent their wrath upon the prisoner, if no one but the old chief was there to restrain them.

It was surmised by all that if Antoine was only a few hours behind us, that darkness would not cause him to stop, but that he would push on without halt till shelter, now so close, was reached. Thus all with anxious anticipation looked forward to a speedy termination to their labour.

"But man proposes, God disposes." After an anxious vigilant night, we were as far from attaining our purpose as ever. Some surmised that we were late in reaching here, and that our prey had passed before we had come to it, but an examination of the ground told that no human foot

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had trod in the vicinity for days. Then a fresh cause of difficulty arose by one of the Indians stating that there was another but more circuitous and less used path to the Mission, a mile or two further up the stream, and that it was not improbable that Antoine, having been here in the summer, knew of it, and consequently had selected it. But the old chief was determined; he would not allow the party to be separated, and felt convinced that we had made choice of the proper place. Day commenced, although with flagging steps to wear by, and the most sanguine began to look discouraged; doubts of the propriety of spending another night here were even advanced, when the confounded dog, that had been tied up as useless, barked in challenge to some one approaching; a voice, and one that all immediately recognised, spoke to it in the coaxing terms usually employed to pacify such animals. From the intonation it was evident that the circumstance had not produced any alarm in the speaker, he possibly thinking it was one of the curs belonging to some of the persons residing at the Mission.

Soon after, the object of our search came in view. At the margin he halted for a moment, then entered the stream and traversed it; but as he was leaving the water to ascend the steep bank, he was sprung upon by those in front of him, his arms pinioned,

and his revolver and knife taken away, the other Indians rushing across the water to the assistance of the captors.

Escorting our prisoner, at length we reached the Mission, the expression that marked the different members of the *cortège* being wonderfully at variance; on the brow and in the dark snake-like eye of the younger Indian was a look which predicted a longing for revenge, a hungering after blood difficult to satisfy, while the prisoner returned with scorn their plainly expressed hostility.

Speaking of the Mission, a place inhabited by persons devoted to a holy life, persons who have given up the world to preach glad tidings to the heathen, I expected to find a spot hallowed and sacred from its very defencelessness, surrounded by fruit trees and gardens, reared under the industrious and skilful hands of its inhabitants; but such was not the case, for an old stockade fence, such as may be seen surrounding the existing frontier or fur-trading forts, enclosed an area of about half an acre, in which were three log-houses, and an old dingy barn-like edifice, which the old chief designated the home of the Great Spirit.

Quiet and stealthy as our approach had been—and who can traverse the ground with such perfect freedom from noise as the moccasin foot-clad Indian?—our advance was soon made known by the deep sharp

voice of half a dozen curs, whose flat sides and distinctly marked ribs told but too plainly that they did not live sumptuously. But the Indian dog ever has this gaunt, half-starved look, for whether food be abundant in the camp, or otherwise, their owners seem to have the belief that a dog is of no value that cannot provide for its own wants.

Sad, indeed, is the fate of these unhappy curs, born frequently without a shelter, nursed by a half-starved mother, abused and punished by whosoever chooses to do so, seldom free from mange, they prematurely become old, and ultimately, when unable to keep up with their owners while travelling, are left behind to become the prey of the first hungry wolf that falls across them.

The inhabitants of the Mission well knew what the angry voices of the ill-mannered pack indicated, and soon a motley crew of about a dozen half-breeds and Indians came forth. A more uninteresting, filthy, unattractive crowd I have seldom seen, and if such were the specimens of humanity that the missionaries had to exercise their vocation on, or that this was a type of the result of their labours, then those good people that absent themselves from country friends and civilisation are to be pitied.

However, with all their unattractiveness of ap-

pearance, they possessed the virtue of hospitality, and angry was the controversy, nay more, blows nearly ensued between the various contestants who desired to become our hosts.

Two very repulsive-looking men seized me, one dragged me to the left, while another, *nolens volens*, pulled me to the right; to save my clothing, if for no other motive, caused me rather roughly to shake them off, when who should you think appeared on the scene but the chief's youngest daughter, who had been induced to leave her people and home by Antoine. Reproaches for her desertion by him naturally might have been expected; but no, true to her love in spite of all she had suffered, she passed her father as if she ignored his presence *in toto*, and threw herself into the prisoner's arms.

Her anguish when she found that he was tied was most touching, and first one then another she supplicated with tearful eye and upraised hand to cut his bonds.

But no, Antoine was doomed, not even her influence could save him from his fate, and soon the poor girl felt convinced that her efforts were but waste of time and strength.

At length she sadly sat down beside him, and with a sad look of submission to the decrees of fate

that must have affected the most callous, placed her paramour's bound hands upon her head.

After a due amount of consideration I selected for my residence, what appeared to be the largest and best kept of the buildings; but bad indeed was the best, for of all the filthy, redolent of foul gases, dingy dwellings I had ever seen, this proved the worst.

Was it to be wondered at, then, that I soon stole forth, not only to breathe the pure air of heaven, but to avoid a species of cross-examination that was exceedingly distasteful? A building, however humble, dedicated by man to God's service, in its repose, has ever had for me a great attraction, for in the deep and sombre shadows that surround you when under its roof, there is a feeling paramount in my bosom that I am between the ordinary outer world and a realm we only know by imagination. Of course, few of us are constructed alike, so outer influences have different effects; thus, all may not think or feel as I do; but this I will say, that I never leave a house of worship, of whatever denomination it may be, without feeling a better man, aye, and what a happy feeling that is, for it causes me to enjoy the sensation experienced by the footsore, worn-out wanderer, who through some chance combination of circumstances is able to get rid of a portion of a burden

that for miles has been crushing him down into the dust, and bringing him nearer and nearer to his final parade.

The interior of the chapel was far from ostentatious ; here and there upon its walls hung a cheap and indifferent print, while the communion-table was decorated with a sadly-tarnished cover, one that evidently had seen long years of service, and on which were placed a cross supporting a representation of the dead Saviour, and flanked on either side by four candlesticks of verdigris-corroded brass. So scant was the light that minutes were required for the eye to distinguish the surroundings, although from a window in the gable a long dusty narrow stream of the warm rays of the setting sun, straight as an arrow in its flight, came from roof to transept. With cautious and subdued step I moved forward. A desire to approach the holiest portion of the edifice and humble myself, was the cause ; by degrees space between me and the door was increased, till I was on the verge of the sanctuary. In another moment I should have been on my knees, when a movement of something earthly caught my ear, my eye instinctively followed the sound, when it rested upon a pale careworn face, so sad, so earnest, yet so submissive, that I stood spell-bound. In those

features was a memory of the past, a dream of boyhood formed into a reality, an age dead brought back to life. But who could it be, some one I had met previously; but where and when? Still the mind and memory worked together and whispered that she I gazed on was no ordinary acquaintance, but one whose fate had been at some past period closely interwoven with my own.

Disturb the unknown in her worship to satisfy my curiosity, would have been sacrilege, so I withdrew as silently as I had entered, with a freight of thought upon my mind that almost overwhelmed me. Outside the building long I stood, and slow the minutes glided into the past, yet I was not impatient, and therefore did not fret at the delay.

The sun had disappeared, and the dark shadows from the hill-side and giant trees were commencing to amalgamate in one undefinable mass, when the door was gently opened, and a stooping, heavily-draped figure, with weary, slow, and uncertain step approached me. But a few yards severed us before she raised her head; previous to that she was ignorant of my presence, but when she did so, and the full face was revealed, I discovered that it was my boy-love, the dream of my youth, the never-forgotten daughter of the old captain at Orillia.

Aye, it was she, she whose vision I had often seen in imagination hovering near me in the snow-sweeping nights of warfare when the exposed trench was my resting-place, or when in murky, blustering darkness the gallant craft that bore me pitched into the ever hungry seas that craved to engulf it. Yes, it was she, but how sad the change; the bright joyous girl of twenty years ago, now the decrepit, worn-out, prematurely aged woman. "Time," I thought, "had dealt roughly with me, but how leniently in comparison."

My tongue for a moment, through the influences of astonishment and surprise, lost its power; at length with abated breath, as if speaking what I had ceased to have a right even to think of in silence, I pronounced her name.

"Not that, not that," she answered. "Years have glided by since the world knew me by that name. I am now the Sister Dolores, and truly I have been well called; but who are you, speak, I say, who are you?" gazing more and more intently in my face till her very eyes seemed to search my soul. "Again, I say, who are you?"

Fear for the consequences made my utterance slow; at length my Christian name was pronounced, when a shriek, so long, so shrill, that it appeared as if out of

the power of mortals to produce, was uttered, and ere I could collect presence of mind to give her support, she fell prostrate on the earth.

Before I had time even to raise her, before I could come to her relief, a crowd had assembled, and the apparently lifeless form was carried off. Sad was my heart as I watched her borne away.

So at last my craving to know who is the White Squaw has been gratified, and how cruelly has the information been imparted to me.

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CHAPTER XVII.

A MORE miserable night than the one that followed I do not think it would be possible to pass; filth predominated everywhere, even in the cooking, and the room stunk from the crowd of unwashed mortality that blocked up every available corner, moreover, it literally swarmed with fleas, and no amount of ingenuity would deny them becoming on such terms of intimacy with your person that might be exceedingly agreeable to them, but far from so to you.

I sat and smoked pipe after pipe, but even this consoler for nearly all earthly ills was but a Job's comforter after all, so that I could see no way out of my difficulties. If it had not been so late, and that the evening had set in bitterly cold, I would have proposed camping out; even if the Indians did not choose to do the same, still I could induce them

to erect a shelter for my sole accommodation, of cedar or hemlock boughs, but it was too late, so like the young cubs I was forced to grin and bear it.

However slowly time may pass when we are suffering discomfort, still if you have patience it will ultimately slip away, and the hour for retiring to my blanket had almost arrived, when the door of the house was opened, and a man in the garb of a priest entered.

He was full of years, far beyond three score and ten, still his figure was erect, while from his chin depended a long beard, white as snow. Each inmate of the cabin, as he passed, bowed his head almost to the ground, as if inspired with more than natural reverence. At length he approached where I was seated, and in soft musical language, strongly tinged with a French accent, spoke to me. So prepossessing was his manner, so thoroughly did he look what I knew him to be, that he required no indorsement to make any one believe that he was a good and true servant of the Cross.

"My son, you are a Catholic?"

"Yes, father, I am."

"I would speak with you, but not before those that are present. Will you accompany me?"

We crossed the enclosure to a small log-house—so

small externally that, deducting the room occupied by the bedstead, there must have been but a scant supply of space for the ordinary duties of life. A hoarse key grated in the door, a ponderous bolt was shot with the report of a pistol, and we entered, the whole being in the most impenetrable darkness. At length a match was struck, and a saucer of grease with a thin meagre wick found, which scarcely produced sufficient light to see into the corners of the limited apartment. A perfect anchorite this man must have been; within the dwelling was not a vestige of aught that spoke of comfort in the most limited sense, and yet at his age, after his years of toil and labour in his Master's service, I could not help thinking he deserved a better sunset to his life; possibly he desired no other, but conscious that he had done his work, reaped his pleasure in the knowledge of it.

Often do I think what a fearful thing it is, to glide on into the vale of years, till you have approached so nigh the verge of the precipice, that it is but the matter of days, possibly hours, till you fall over into the gulf of eternity, and not to have one of your own flesh and blood, your own kith and kin to watch by you, tend you in your weakness, and help to shelter the flickering light of departing life from the cool

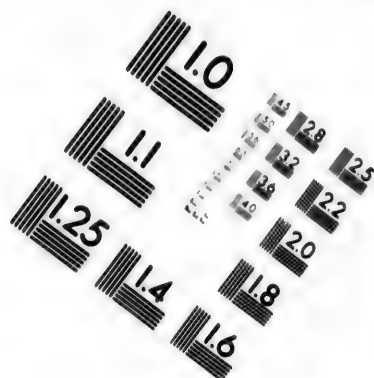
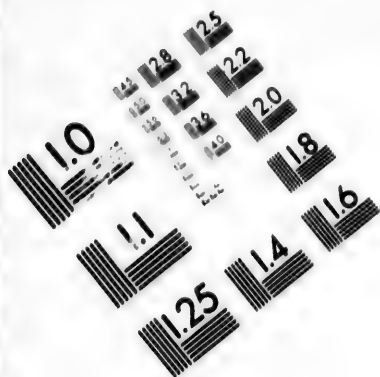
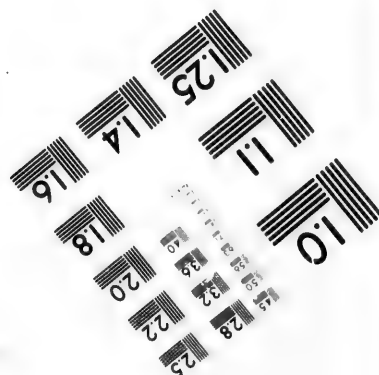
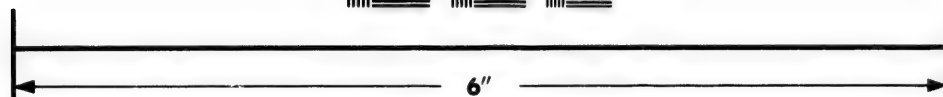
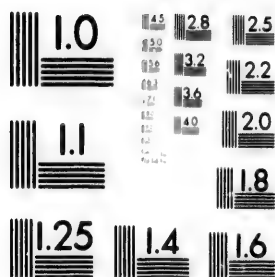


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blast that would exterminate it before its time. Yes, sad indeed must be the hours that precede demise, when left alone to combat death.

And this is what this aged and holy man has to look forward to, at no very distant date; but to my narrative.

"My son, as a Christian, will you not do me a favour?" he inquired.

"Certainly, if in my power."

"Well, assist me to have my countryman liberated; the Indians will assuredly take his life, and he is a sinner, a bad man I fear, and so the less prepared to leave this world."

"But I cannot interfere, he has committed murder, taken a human life. No, father, ask me what you will that is in my power to grant, and willingly will I do it; but you now require of me what I have no power to do."

"But, my son, you can intercede with the old chief in his behalf, and doubtless will succeed; but if you should not, you can afford him an opportunity to escape, and you will assuredly receive a blessing. Think if you were in his position through the chance of circumstances, and think further that, you as well as all of us will some day have to crave for mercy, yes, beg and importune for it, for we are all sinners,

and as you hope to receive forgiveness, stretch forth your hand to rescue this unfortunate man from an untimely end, and probably a death by torture. Grant me what I ask, and you shall be remembered in my prayers."

"Once more, father, I cannot; it grieves me to refuse, but it is out of my power."

My decision caused the old man's features to alter from the former kindly look to one indicating anger. After rising to depart, I said, "Father, be not angry with me, I have miles to travel, and numerous dangers to encounter before I reach civilisation; let us part in peace and with your blessing, for we probably shall never meet again."

But he drew himself up to his full height, fixed his keen penetrating eyes upon me, and pointing to the door said, "My blessing, rather my curse! You, a Christian, yet would hand over one of your own faith to the unbaptised heathen, go! And may you be dealt with as you deal with others."

Remonstrance was useless; grieved, yes, even sick at heart, I stole forth into the night air.

I certainly had had sufficient excitement for one day to cause an exhausted body and overwrought brain to crave for rest; but no, lie which way I would, close my eyes, and keep them shut for inde-

finite periods of time, alter the position of my blankets or temporary pillow, sleep persistently refused to come to my aid.

And the atmosphere was stifling, not from heat, but from the foetid exhalations arising from my numerous filthy comrades.

At length I could endure my position no longer, so rose and went forth. The night air was intensely cold, so cold that it crept into the uttermost parts of my body, still, even that was preferable to the foul atmosphere of the confined cabin. At length I reached the river-side, the water broke and played in a thousand eddying, murmuring ripples, while the cold clear light of a rising moon tipped their surface with a sheen, so cold and metallic as to cause me to draw away for fear a false or too hurried step would precipitate me into its embrace. And away across the river loomed the dark giant hemlocks and pines, blended into one sombre funeral pall without break or outline. As I looked upon the scene a weird-like feeling stole over me, not lessened by the distant, but distinct bay of the grey wolf. Again, again, his call was answered, each voice bringing fancies that the fiends of hell were loose and seeking for their victims.

I am, to a certain extent, superstitious—I think all

my countrymen are more or less so—so I remained and listened, and almost feared that some of the denizens of another world were about to appear, or that although invisible they were floating round me, plotting in their elfish spite some piece of ill-fortune to be practised on me. Nearer and more doleful sounded the voices of the wolves, and the scornful maniacal call of the owl chimed in to add fresh horror to the scene. I was about to retire, for I was excited, nervous, and the body craved for what it would not accept, rest, when my arm was touched so gently, so imperceptibly, that it might have been caused by the caress of a playful breeze. I turned, started back, for I was totally unprepared to find that I was not alone, beside me stood a heavily-draped female figure.

“Be not alarmed, it is me.” I knew the voice too well to require further identity. “I am here to seek a favour at your hands. You owe me one, for you stole my girlish heart, and vowed to love me ever, but fate took you away, and as distance increased between us and months and years glided on, hope died out and left me widowed in heart, and wrecked in health. I say for this you owe me reparation, and by granting my request I freely forgive you for the past, aye everything, although you have made me

old, who am yet young, a broken-hearted woman before I knew the joys of life."

"Say no more, I know it all. Whatever I can do, shall be done."

"Save this man. You refused to listen to the entreaties of the good old father, listen now to mine, so that in the future short span of life before me, I may still keep you as the idol of my memory, and believe that you are not so faithless as I thought you. We shall never meet again on earth, you will not, dare not refuse my last request."

"I had resolved not to interfere; but your appeal I cannot refuse. I will do my best."

A hand was held out, a hand I had so often kissed when the warm blood of youth flowed through its veins. Now, when I took it, it was cold and damp, and wasted away; I raised it to my lips, in a moment after it was withdrawn, and noiselessly as did Sister Dolores approach me, as silently did she steal away.

Alone, yes I was again alone, and I feared to be so, my feelings were so overwrought that I dreaded solitude, dreaded my own dark shadow, so hastened, with the steps of the guilty, back to the dwellings.

On passing the shanty where the prisoner was confined, I looked into the room, for the door was on the jar; in a corner lit up by the yellow flickering un-

certain light of the fire sat Antoine, his black eyes illuminated with feelings of revenge and passion. As I advanced, they caught mine—what deadly hate was in that look. Leaning against him, and sound asleep, her face brightened with a childish smile, reposed the poor Indian girl, true to her love, more true than ever because the object of her adoration was in trouble.

What sting can hurt like being deserted by her we love? What can give such consolation in our misfortunes, as to know that she, in whom all our hopes and aspirations are centred, loves deeper and more fondly the heavier and more intense our miseries?

Anxious not to disturb the slumberers, I left, pondering how I was to fulfil my lately-made promise.

Day broke dismal and drear, the clouds appeared only penning up their tears, to break out afresh in bitterer grief; the earth, the trees, the hill-sides were humid and moist, while a raw fog in fleecy vapours arose with slow but doubtful progress.

When all was ready for our return journey, and prisoner, escort, and chief were assembled, I approached the old man, and asked him to let Antoine go. I was going to plead, to urge my case in the strongest terms, but the settled determined look that

passed over his brow, and the scowling, vindictive, defiant look of his followers told me that any further effort was but a waste of breath, and likely to entail upon myself trouble. The cavalcade was reinforced by the old man's daughter, and not for a moment did she leave the side of the object of her love; for the first few miles our progress was slow, but when the sun had burst forth, and his genial welcome rays had warmed and dried both ground and herbage, our advance became more rapid.

Towards noon an odour peculiar to the wild lands, and one not to be forgotten when experienced, attracted universal comment, for it was the peculiar smell that indicated that the forest was on fire. In this, however, there was deemed to be nothing alarming, for every indication told that the fire was still far distant; and, moreover, except a change of wind occurred, it was far from probable that it would advance in our direction.

The Indians are so skilled in woodcraft, that the matter did not trouble me, especially as they showed no indication of regarding it as serious. Thus, when we came to our halting-place, I selected my place for the night, hoping that sleep would be vouchsafed me in sufficient quantity to make up for the past deficiency I had suffered.

By rotation the prisoner was guarded, each taking a term of two hours' duty. My watch was to be from about twelve to two in the morning. Soundly I slept when I was ruthlessly awoke to go on sentry. What would I not have given to have rested longer. Taking my revolver, I sat down upon a log, hating the task, but determined to fulfil it. Half an hour I sat moodily pondering over the past, recalling scenes of different and distant lands, climes where the sun is always bright and gladdening, and where the sparkling seas reflect a thousand glistening lights; where palm and cypress wave, and the coo of the love-sick dove is drowned by the roar of the stealthy man-eater. Fair Japan and its verdant hills, sterile-coasted China and its clay-baked mountains flitted before me like the rapid repetition of dissolving views, when Antoine spoke:

"Give me a chance, captain, and I will repay you some day."

"I cannot; the Indians have shown their confidence in my honour by placing me as a guard over you, that confidence I will not abuse; at the right time and place I will serve you to the utmost of my ability, you must rest satisfied with this promise."

While this conversation was going on, the chief's daughter had left her place beside him, soon after

returning. There was something in her manner that raised my suspicions. Closely watching her I observed that in her right hand was a knife, doubtless intended to cut the cords that bound the hands of her lover. In amoment I seized her ; like a fiend she fought, and but for my power of wrist enabling me to disarm her, she doubtless would have done me a serious injury.

The struggle was momentary and noiseless, so it disturbed no one ; however, the prisoner rose as if to assist his ally. Pointing my pistol at him I made him return to his original position ; but it was with the air of one foiled not conquered that he did it.

Soon after I was relieved, and never in life from so distasteful a duty.

It might have been an hour from dawn. Sound had been my sleep, though far from free of dreams, when I was recalled to consciousness by the sharp report of a gun, and the springing up of the various forms that reclined around me. In a moment I comprehended the situation. Antoine had escaped, and unquestionably through the assistance of the devoted Indian girl.

Immediate search was instituted, but by the time the sun had risen, all had returned to camp unsuc-

cessful from want of light to follow the fugitive's track.

But the Indians were not to be foiled thus easily, and resolute and indomitable as bloodhounds, they bided but their time to renew their search; however, the object of their pursuit had gained two hours' law, and if fortune smiled propitiously, his chance of escape looked most promising.

The smoke that had attracted my attention yesterday had now become unpleasantly stifling, yet my comrades thought nothing of it—if there was danger surely they would be aware of it, I argued, and thus satisfied myself, saying nothing, but following the party in Indian file, while they searched every bush and blade of grass for indications of the fugitive's trail. We soon found it, and, at a pace that sorely pressed me, it was pursued, and what direction did it lead? further and further into the dense, stifling smoke. We had been in pursuit about three hours, when a distant dead-like roar, occasionally interrupted by crashes as if caused by the fall of heavy timber, struck on my ear; nearer and nearer we approached it, till there remained no doubt that we were advancing towards a giant forest fire. I pointed out this, called upon the Indians to halt, to turn back and seek a place of safety, but a most unwilling ear did they lend. At length, sparks

of fire could be distinctly seen floating over the tree-tops, and with a deeply uttered anathema and curse they found themselves compelled to desist from further pursuit. But what had become of Antoine, with hell in his heart and murder on his brow? He preferred trusting himself to the devouring element, to trusting to the tender mercies of his own race.

Once we commenced to retire; our retreat was most precipitous, for it was more than doubtful whether we could succeed in gaining a place of safety. Long, severe, and rapid was our march; but swiftly as we fled, swifter far followed the uncontrollable fire.

Again and again I feared I could no longer endure the exertion, but a love of life and a horror to suffer such a death lent me fresh energy. But the human frame could not withstand such exertion long, and full well I felt that unless a river was soon found, that my last tramp, last hunting expedition had been performed.

So near was the conflagration now that we were actually amid glowing embers and ashes; thicker and faster they followed our retreating steps, till all were in momentary peril. Yet the Indians never murmured, showed no indication of fear, but moodily, still energetically, stalked forward. A

quarter of an hour more of this would settle the matter, I felt convinced; in fact, that to prolong the agony further was useless. But again an inward monitor would whisper, "Be a man, show yourself worthy of your race, remember that while there is life there is hope." Still it appeared madness to hope; behind was a wall of flame hunting us down with the persistency that the sleuth hound pursues the deer—two hundred, three hundred yards more, and then—yes, that is the point; but what do the Indians see, for they increase their pace? I strain my eyes to learn. Can it be—yes it is—a river, for the wood has become thin and daylight shines in broken intervals through it; forward! forward! and, worn out, footsore, scorched, I rush waist deep in the rushing water.

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A week or more had passed since my escape, when I found myself back at the shanty. The poor Indian girl was dead—having died only a day previous to our return, so I was only allowed to pay her the last honour that the living can offer to the dead.

Under the birch-tree, beside Skye, she rests—a flower of the forest plucked by the cruel destroyer before it bloomed.

On still air fell
No solemn knell
Of steeple bell
Rung for the dead.

No incense fume—
No stately plume
Of sable gloom
O'erdeck'd her bed.

No taper light,
No choral rite,
No priestly might
Her soul delayed.

No loved ones weep,
None vigil keep—
All lie asleep—
No prayers are said.

But angel band
With loving hand
At God's command,
Guard round her head.

Every hour that my departure for civilisation was delayed, irritated and fretted me; the beautiful scenery, the handsome trees and picturesque rapids ceased to be attractive, and I longed, I cannot say how ardently, for the moment to arrive when I should turn my back on all—yes, and hoped that I never should gaze upon them again. I could not sleep or even rest, everything palled upon me, and made me long for friends and relatives.

The assiduous attention of my Indian boy, ever true and ever grateful to me, were distasteful, but Poteen, the half-bred colley, avoided me as if I were rabid.

The passage of time may be slow, but cannot be brought to an anchor, and the desired morning at length broke, cold and cheerless, but the season of the year was now so late that otherwise could scarcely be anticipated, and fortunately a lowering morning does not always predict a sunless day.

My escort, which consisted of four volunteers and the boy, had left the shanty with the last load, and I was alone, taking a final survey of my premises, to see for myself that nothing was left behind, when the old chief entered. Our intimacy had taught him to shake hands, and as he came forward he held out his honest nut-brown palm; I took it in mine and held it for some minutes without a word being spoken—it was evident his heart was too full for language to express his feelings. At length words came to his relief, and again for the fourth or fifth time he begged me to delay my departure till the spring, pointing out in the most vivid terms the dangers that must surround so long a journey at this season of the year. I was well aware that there was truth in every word he said, but I would have risked

more than life, to being imprisoned here for possibly half a year. When the good old man found my decision was unchangeable, his stoicism fairly broke down and a diamond tear glistened in each eye, while his intonation became thick and indistinct. To witness grief and tears in woman is truly bad enough, "but talk not of grief till thou hast seen the tears of warlike men," and truly the poetess wrote correctly, for I had the greatest difficulty in subduing my tendency to do likewise. An embrace, a muttered prayer to the Great Spirit to protect me was uttered, and so terminated the interview.

Scarcely daring to look back, I took my seat, the canoe glided from the shore, and soon a turn in the river was passed that shut out probably for ever my wilderness home.

We were in the lightest travelling order, for I had given away all I possessed which was not absolutely required for my journey; thus we sped rapidly onwards, and ere darkness came had traversed many miles.

For a week each day was a repetition of its predecessor. Cold, bitter cold at night, with a bright warm sun at noon; still my companions ceased not their labour or gave utterance to a murmur.

As we completed our water navigation, the weather

broke, and so severe was the frost and heavy the fall of snow, that for a week we were forced to halt. A more trying ordeal I never endured, and, but for the Indians, could not have existed through it; but their knowledge of expediences overcame what to the white man must have proved his grave.

Again the journey was renewed, and after a long and wearisome march, exactly such a tramp as the French experienced in their retreat from Moscow, we reached the village of Rama on Lake Couchachin.

My liabilities to my gallant escort settled, I left then for Orillia in a sleigh drawn by a fast horse, the last sight of my old friends being obtained through a break in the woodland that displayed a view of the village. As I left them so they stood, unwilling to depart till they had seen the last sight of the white wanderer.

The sudden stopping of the train awoke me from a long and most refreshing sleep; I looked forth, day was breaking, and the white houses of Albany reposed in the distance. City of Albany, whate'er you may boast of, you have reason to be proud of the fair queen of song that claims thee for her home. Mademoiselle Albani I mean, sweetest cantatrice I e'er have listened to.

As the train again stops, a hundred voices demand to know which hotel I intend residing at. The Windsor in Fifth Avenue is my choice, and never, I can safely affirm, did I reside at so charming and comfortable an establishment.

I am again in civilisation, but not home. The noble ship *Java*, of the staunch and true Cunard Company, sails on Wednesday. At the appointed hour I got on board, and in spite of gales and fogs Liverpool is reached on the tenth day, and I look back with mingled pleasure and regret upon my year of LONE LIFE.

THE END.

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